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—Railways, postages—in a word, all the numerous facilities of the age—have almost annihilated distance, and, as a natural result, caused an individual trade between country customers and London establishments. Those who do not visit town, so as to select and purchase directly, send for patterns from which they can give their orders. But as all apparent advantages on the one hand have more or less their corresponding drawbacks, so this system is not without its bane. Pushing tradesmen make a market by offering goods at lower rates than they can possibly be sold at to realise a fair profit. The bait traps the unreflective, and the result is that the receipts *en masse* are not equal to the tempting samples. There is no new invention in this; it has been practised in wholesale merchandise and by candidates for contracts, as the proverb hath it, since there were hills and valleys. But we grieve to add it is sometimes resorted to by those whom one would credit for more integrity. Ladies, therefore, need exercise caution, and place confidence only in houses of old-established fame, for rapidly-made businesses are not generally reliable. And to what does this assertion amount more than to the fact that nothing great can be effected not only without labour but without time, and that Rome was not built, as the old saying says, in a day? Messrs. Jay, of Regent-street, whose name is well known amongst the few on the list of *bonâ fide* establishments in the metropolis, are about to adopt a plan (which will be registered) for assisting country ladies in choosing for themselves London fashions and fabrics. And their customers may rest assured that they will thus be enabled to obtain goods of every quality, both low and high priced, at the most reasonable terms—that is, the terms of small profits for quick returns—and that they may firmly rely upon the thoroughly corresponding character of samples and supplies.—From the *Court Journal*, April 27, 1867.

# EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

יאכד יומ אולד כו

“Let the day perish in which I was born.”

VOL. I.

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## P R E F A C E.

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A GENTLEMAN to whom the manuscript of the following work was shown, said, "The writer of it methinks must have felt as if he were God at the Day of Judgment, summoning before him the great ones of the earth, and making them confess their crimes."

And in truth, the remark, though some may cavil at it, does not seem to be without a certain essence of truth. No such book has, probably, ever come before the public. Here and there, in out-of-the-way places, we may find sketches of this or that illustrious person; but in no work that the writer knows of are they all grouped as here, and shown in their true colours.

He who reads this Autobiography will have a more complete knowledge of the first half of the eighteenth century, and of the rogues who played the chief characters in its drama, than could be gained by anyone who had not studied the history of the period with unremitting attention for many years, and out of a library of books. Its accuracy is somewhat marvellous. It were to be wished that a less severe tone had been adopted by a son towards his parents. But they were, in fact, parental only in name. Mr. Montagu owed nothing to either father or mother, but his birth—if that can be considered a boon. The avarice of the first, and the profligacy and heartlessness of the last, bore fruit in his heart—Dead Sea apples. He passed through great ordeals of misery, while his father rolled in wealth, and would give him hardly anything—in fact he gave him nothing until the world had soured and hardened every human feeling in his heart. “Have you heard,” says Horace Walpole, to George Montagu, “what immense wealth old Wortley

has left?—One million, three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. It is all to centre in Lady Bute and her family” (February 9th, 1761). A few months after his mother, on her death-bed, bequeathed to her only son one guinea, thus needlessly exhibiting her hatred, even while she was hastening, as it were, into the presence of the Great Judge.

Mr. Montagu was a misanthropist—he could not have been otherwise. He has stripped the mask from many of the villains whom we are accustomed to regard as great, noble, wise, or learned. In this he appears to have followed the example of Fielding—whose History of Jonathan Wild the Great, seems to have been dictated by the same motive.

There is so much humbug and affectation in the world that, when a rascal is exposed, weak people hold up their hands and exclaim, “ Dear me, this is dreadful ! ” They do so, especially if the rogues be people of rank. Mr. Montagu evidently disregarded such persons. Juvenal and Persius had no such squeamishness ; and

though our great satirists, Dryden and Pope, have exposed their villains under fictitious names, they have taken good care that posterity should have no doubt whom they intended to hold up to odium. Mr. Montagu is equally outspoken. Like Swift and Byron, he tears the mask from humbug.

The political corruption of the time can only be compared to that which flourished in Rome in the days when Jugurtha said that “all things were to be got for money there.” Every man, as Walpole boasted, had his price. Alas! had not every woman too?

Private morality can hardly be said to have existed. The example of the Court, and the nobility poisoned the whole kingdom. A more false and dishonest crew than its literary men it is hard to imagine. The bench was filled with very odious fellows. The Church was in ruins. All ecclesiastical promotion flowed only through the Prime Minister and Queen Caroline; and history has rendered hateful the characters of both. How could piety or virtue hope for any-

thing like sympathy from either? We pride ourselves on being better now, and I hope we are. Yet, upwards of a hundred years ago, Bubb Dodington spoke of “the low and venal wretches of Bridgewater;” and at the present moment we have Royal Commissioners ferreting out in that borough, and in one or two others, the same species of infamy which made it notorious in the days of Pelham.

The whole period was rank and rotten in the extreme. Atheism and profligacy prevailed everywhere. Two men arose and stemmed the tide—Wesley and Whitfield. The writer of this is no unqualified admirer of either; but they did great good, and they helped to save the country from universal pollution. They awakened a spirit which smote Infidelity and chastened public morals. Had we gone on unchecked, we should have deserved the purification of fire which Sodom and Gomorrah experienced.

In the pages which follow, Vice is shown by Mr. Montagu in her naked, hideous form. So exhibited, she is always detestable. I am cer-

tain that more real instruction to the soul may be gained by a study of these pages than by the perusal of any fifty works, whose avowed object is to teach morals, philosophy, or religion.

Y.

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# EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU.

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## CHAPTER I.

And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father.

My mother was a wit. She wrote poetry, composed epigrams, penned the liveliest letters, and scribbled off the bitterest ballads on all her friends and acquaintances. Her tongue was always tipped with gall and bitterness ; her pen was finely pointed with venom. Scandal was her great delight, her eye flashed with glee at a double meaning ; a loose anecdote of one of her lady loves lifted her into Paradise for the day. Happily for her, the enchanting freedom of her

female friends was such, that she was seldom without the ambrosial essence which made her blest. She kept a diary, in which she noted down, in the broadest terms, every little slip, or sally, or frail foible which her dearly beloved of the masculine, feminine, or neuter gender—and these last constitute a great proportion of what is called “the best society”—committed, or were said to have committed; and when the story was not in itself particularly piquant, she spiced and seasoned it in her own fashion, so as to render it hot, agreeable or stimulating to the depraved taste of those in whom her heart sought comfortable fellowship. Her heart did I say? Alas! she had no heart. What female wit ever had? There was, it is true, a globular piece of flesh somewhere between the right and left lung, and this performed the merely animal functions of that noble organ, but resembled its prototype only as an automaton might resemble a man. It was a saddening thing to look upon so fair an outside, and reflect how base and black was all within. The asp lurking under roses, the gilded chalice filled with poison, the whited sepul-

chre covering rottenness—these are hackneyed images, or I would have likened her to one and all. Yet what more appropriate picture of false man or heartless woman than this last? How fine and smooth and shining is that marble exterior; the carving beautiful, the devices exquisite, the lines and curves breathing grace, elegance, and perfection; the inscription eloquent of the angel that lies beneath. We lift up the lid. Pah! an ounce, no, a ton of civet to sweeten the poisoned atmosphere. And what are these I see creeping, crawling, writhing, horrible in ghastly life, in and out the eyes, over the moulder-  
ering cheeks, through the tangled clotted hair, that once glittered like Apollo's golden tresses. Let us replace the cover, nor scan too closely that view of hell which is beheld, when human hearts or sepulchres are opened. If the Gods see all hearts as I have seen some, why then I doubt if they can be happy. I would not be a God on any such condition.

Lady Mary was a duke's daughter, and I have the superlative felicity of high descent. The blood that rolls in my veins is of the noblest

quintessence. It is made of the rarest claret, the finest venison, the richest turtle, the most delicious punch, and the most fragrant grapes and pine apples. These, I think, may be said to constitute the heavenly ichor of our patricians, and of this divine food our bodies I suppose are made. Where our souls come from is quite a different affair. Some, I suppose, from heaven ; the greatest number from hell. We know our fathers and mothers don't make them, nor find them, nor transmit them, nor do anything beyond giving them—poor wandering outcasts from the spheres—a corporeal vehicle for their development on this beautiful earth. They form the glasses, but the liquid nectar that fills them comes from another quarter. And this vehicle, or to continue the image, this pure piece of crystal which my right honourable body is, was made, I am glad to say, of the precious and splendid materials I have enumerated. I have compared it with the rough clay of which the sons of common people, our dogs, slaves, or peasants are made, and I am ashamed to confess it, I have discovered no perceptible difference ;

nay, in many things I can perceive that my own sparkling person is inferior to that of the vilest clods, whom I suppose out of excessive good nature, or refined sarcasm, we call our fellow-creatures. I am not so strong as the hamal of Stamboul, I am not so tall, or straight, or finely shaped as the Mamlouk of Egypt. I am very much inferior to the mountain dwellers of the Pyrenees. I have wrestled with an Italian bandit, and found myself a baby in his grasp. Nevertheless, who out of Bedlam or the pulpit, would dare to liken these dense, dull pieces of earthenware, made and fashioned by polite Providence only for our basest uses, with such clear and white and exquisite porcelain as myself? The parsons, indeed, say we are all equal, and all the same, God wot! How the sly rogues must laugh in their lawn sleeves! How the arch prelates must enjoy the fine irony! And how the devil would laugh—if he could get into one of our consecrated churches—if he could but pass the holy seraph-guarded threshold—to hear the pious congregation, looking as demure as cats, cry “Amen,” when every man and woman

there know that it was all a lie, and a make-believe, and sham ; and that my lord in purple, and my lady in fine linen, no more considered their tailor or mantua maker to be of the same species as themselves, than the humble-minded tailor did the boy who ran his errands for a penny, and who received his kick with the same Christian chastened humility, that even his lordly grace shewed when the sovereign cuffed him out of the closet. But the devil can't get in, and so don't laugh, poor fellow, and the godly continue in their heavenly course, and listen to the Sabbath fable, and think it's all very fine, and grand, and so forth, and go and do otherwise. And so the world wags, and will wag on, until Antichrist comes, and finds us all perfect to his hand.

I remember my grandfather well. He was a tall man, full of state and grandeur, so courtly, so benevolent in seeming ; harder than granite in his inner essence. He trod the earth as if it were highly honoured by his foot ; he looked up at the heaven to see whether the sun, the moon, and planets did not regard him with admiration. If he commanded the first, I do not know that it

ever stood still; if he gave his orders to the second, I don't believe that they made obeisance to him. If they did, we doubtless should have heard so. I suppose his modesty sealed his lips, and he let them go their own course. With his star on his left breast, just over the place where his heart was supposed to be, and in his ducal dress of velvet and gold and ermine, did he not look the impersonation of all that was heroic? He certainly did. That sparkling star was a symbol of the sparkling, shining, glorious heaven-descended spirit enshrined within that patrician heart, beaming with every virtue, and quite eclipsing—if it could be seen—the radiant lustre of the jewels with which the star was studded. O diamond! pale thy fires, and dazzling emerald veil thine ineffectual rivalry. What brings thee here to emulate the transcendent and pellucid spirit that is in this man? But unluckily the spirit could not be seen. It was too fine a spirit to show itself to vile corporeal eyes; it was so like divinity in its brightness, that mere ordinary mortals would be stricken blind or dead, like

Paul or Semele, if they did but behold it in its celestial effulgence. The prime minister of the day therefore, who was alone conscious of its rare excellence, determined that some appropriate badge, some small faint type of that which was invisible, should be shown to the unconscious vulgar world, to win their worship of the Beautiful. He gave him the blue ribband of the garter.

His grace, the Duke of Kingston, was generous to a fault. His bosom overflowed with gratitude. Could there be a better proof of his virtue? He was determined not to be outdone by the first lord. He at once placed at his disposal some half dozen boroughs and their independent members, then very much wanted in a House of Commons more piggish than the minister thought right. He went farther. He gave him up his very soul. From that day he became the most obedient servant of the cabinet. The opposition was base enough to call him a pliant tool and sycophant. He voted black white, and white black. He defended all that ministers did, and vilified all that the out-of-place purists solemnly

declared they ought to have done. He was loud in their praise even when I fear he knew that they were villains ; he was chivalrous enough to take upon himself a portion of their most criminal responsibilities. He did not scruple at falsehood, if falsehood was necessary. He would not speak an untruth for a diadem ; no, the aristocracy never speak lies ; they only think and act them ; they don't commit themselves ; but his whole public life became thenceforth a living lie.

The Mussulmans say that when we are dead, and waiting to be damned, our vices assume some hideous form, and present themselves before the astonished ghost, with some such words as these, “ while you lived, you rode me, now it is my turn and I will ride you,” whereupon the horrid beast ascends the back of the defunct, and rides him everlasting through the plains of hell. If this be true, and I hope it is, we shall see some queer creatures in the infernal regions. I expect to find my grandfather there with some misshapen gigantic fox, or colossal rat, seated on his ducal back, spurring him through perdition, and glaring

on him with vulpine eyes of fraud, cruelty, cunning, and duplicity. And both will probably lacquey after the Minister, whose monstrous rider I shall rejoice to see. I hope he will show him no more mercy than the old Man of the Mountain showed Sindbad in the Eastern tale.

My mother was—let me see, how old?—two-and-twenty when my grandfather summoned her one fine morning into his awful presence. A grand match had been proposed; it was sanctioned by the minister, it was approved by the king. It would unite two powerful families whose political interests conjoined would make the opposition tremble, and flaming patriots see the folly of their ways. Fifteen worthy and incorruptible boroughs would be at the immediate command of the distinguished statesman who then happily guided the destinies of England, and led in his leash the two noble and high-minded peers who were to blend their blood in holy matrimony. The lady who was to cement this sacred triple alliance was nothing in their consideration; a majority in the commons on a beer bill was the main and moving engine. Secure this, and

England was saved. Lose it, and the destinies of uncounted millions, including the ministry, were for ever destroyed. Any single woman, a score, a thousand, a myriad weighed against this was of course lighter than a feather or a flake of snow.

The bridegroom was sixty-five, but he was a nobleman of immense wealth, ancient pedigree, and blue blood, azure enough for the most fastidious Spaniard. He was rotten with every disorder that unbridled indulgence in the court of King Charles the Second of sacred memory, and his congregated vestals was sure to entail upon the happy votary of morning, noon, and midnight pleasure ; but he had high breeding, was perfectly well-dressed, and owned two castles, fifty footmen, not including his members of parliament, who were out of livery. He had seduced in his vigorous days—alas ! they were now gone for ever—several scores of women, and cast them on the streets, with their and his offspring, with a philosophy worthy of the Spartans, or that venerable sage, Mr. John James Rousseau ; but his plate was superb, his cooks first rate, his

snuff-boxes in fine taste, and his smile when the paint was fresh looked sweet and courtly. He was too knowing to believe in God, or virtue, or truth, or honour, or decency, or anything that uplifts mankind above the ape tribe; but he was far too well bred to enunciate his metaphysics in public, or to quarrel with anyone for an absurd antediluvian belief in old wives' tales, or superstitious fables. Among his private friends—the cream of the cream, the flower and glory of the peerage—he sometimes unbent, and even condescended to give a reason for the unbelief that was in him. He had seen too many bishops, he said, to believe in God; too many patriots to believe in honesty, and too many court virgins to believe in chastity; so he lived on, mocking all three, and flourished, and was fawned upon by all who loved good feeding more than heaven, and did not care what lies they told, so that the paunch was filled and the gullet tickled with gratuitous dainties. He moved, I need not say, in the most exalted circles of rank and fashion; he blazed in the highest spheres of light—the observed of all observers, the adored of all matrons

who had fair daughters to dispose of in the slave market of Pall Mall, or Grosvenor Square. The minister always smiled on him, as Satan might on one of his imps—the courtiers, pages, and other honourable and noble lick-plates about the palace, half prostrated themselves in the dust as he appeared, for such were the commands which Gold Stick issued. The maids of honour—every one of whom had been dishonoured—quarrelled about him, and almost pulled caps when no superior spirit was nigh. There was scarcely a lady in the land who would not have felt herself dignified by his friendship, and would not have jumped out of her chemise at an offer of his white and jewelled hand, though it must be owned it trembled more than was agreeable, and was a hand that had performed many dirty operations. He was, in truth, a very noble person, and when I read an account of him the other day in the Rev. Mr. Jacob's Peerage, I was rather disgusted with Providence for permitting so rare a specimen of mankind to die at all. He should have been immortal; he should at all events have lived for a thousand years or two, to shew poor

erring, low-bred, shop-keeping human nature to what great heights it may ascend—to what splendid summits of virtue poor fallen man under circumstances like his may be raised. But peace to his name! His memory will at all events survive in Jacob's perfumed and disinterested page. I hope that reverend clergyman will be favoured as he deserves. Such eulogies ought not to pass without reward. It will be a pity if the good man be left merely to the agreeable sensations of his own heart, and the reflections of a mind conscious of its truthfulness. The family I know have several fat livings. Heaven grant that he may get one or all. The brothers of their mistresses they can provide for in the Treasury. But if they should do otherwise, why then I hope he will erase the epicedium from his next edition, and leave posterity in ignorance of such a bright particular meteor.

This noble lord was filled with the glorious ambition of progeniting me. Of all the fair maidens who moved in the glorious galaxy of St. James's, the fairest in his eyes was Lady Mary Pierrepont, eldest daughter of his grace, the

Duke of Kingston, afterwards my esteemed mother, the Cassiopeia of Arlington Street, and the toast of the kit-cats. He came in a coach and six; he saw but did not conquer. It was the lady who won the victory, but it was a triumph for which she did not labour. She had no objection to see lovers in scores, or even in hundreds, harnessed to her chariot wheels, and dying for a smile, a glance, or a word of recognition, but then they must be at all events men. The Marquis, it must be owned, was now scarcely one. He had some trifling defects; trifling in the eyes of wisdom I mean, but great in the estimation of a young lady, who I fear knew more than was quite correct. He rather tottered, his breath stank, his teeth were out, he had lost the sight of one eye, and the other was gummy; he often drivelled, and became a disgusting object. But his grace, the Duke of Kingston, saw only his rent roll, and the First Lord of the Treasury considered only his boroughs. My Lady Mary cared for neither just at that time; she had another man in her eye. Scandal and Mr. Pope declare that she had two to whom she even wrote love letters.

Yet she did not disregard wealth and fame with a fine indifference. That species of madness flourished only in the days of fig-leaf petticoats and Paradise apples. She was too sensibly brought up for any such atheistical heresy. The family maxims on this point had been of the most orthodox kind. She knew exactly what these meant; she had thoroughly calculated their real value; what they were worth and what they would bring. No lady in the land better estimated the solid contentment of heart and satisfaction with Providence and its decrees that springs from thirty thousand a year, and the possession of a little parliamentary empire, with which one can do as one likes. But she thought if a man was tacked to them, it would be on the whole a better bargain than if she got them with a monkey, or an old corpse, whose very touch to a sensitive woman, and this she was then, was like pollution. Well—I think she was right.

Let me go back to that first morning, when my mother was summoned by her papa. I was obliged to digress, but I suppose I shall digress often. I mean to write, not according to rules of

art, but in accordance with the humour of the moment, and I shall follow my own whim in preference to that of Aristotle, or any other dead or living critic. Learned reader if thou like it not say so, and abandon my book forthwith, but revile me not in the least, for truly I have had enough abuse in my time, and I am now rhinoceros-hided against opinion. Once, I was a sensitive plant, but, God bless me, that time is gone, and I fear it never will come back. If thou goest with me thou shalt find me not a bad fellow, but I fear rather a sharp-tongued one, for I have been so kicked and buffeted about from my very cradle, that all the wine within me has changed into vinegar, and I am no longer what I once was. My father detested me as his heir ; my mother neglected and hated me almost before I was out of petticoats ;—since then what have I not endured ? Erasmus used to call his life an “ Iliad of misfortunes ;” mine, dear reader, has been little better, and though I have had some fair glimpses of sunshine, my sky has been on the whole chequered by cloud, and mist and tempest ; and now towards its close, I heartily wish it were

over, and that the curtain were descended on the wretched farce. Well it soon will be, and then—

But let me proceed to Arlington Street, where my most noble grandpa is now waiting for his charming daughter. Methinks I see him seated as if in royal fashion. The sofa is of flowered satin, and his gold-embroidered velvet coat-tails look regal and flowing, and terribly sublime on the brilliant coverlet. He is perriwigged and perfumed like Louis le Grand, and is quite enough to frighten any ordinary young lady disposed to rebel, into the most thorough sense of propriety and submission. Kneeling to him, my mother received his blessing. What a comedy for gods and men must this have been. She is motioned into a low chair which has been already placed opposite to where he sits, at the other side of the broad, finely sculptured chimney piece, over which frowned a grim family portrait, awful enough to scare even ghosts away. I am told she trembled as if half surmising the object for which she was summoned, but if she did she had spirit enough to conceal it, and she masked her

face like the oldest politician of the court. She had a will of her own also, and was fond of showing it when it was expedient. Indeed all her friends were remarkably self-willed young ladies, and despised papa and mamma with the most well bred air. But as they knew that papa and mamma had legacies to leave, they did not mind telling them so in public, only they made up for it by ridiculing them in private. On these maxims my lady rested, and they did not desert her now. She subsequently became bolder and more defiant, and when she had learned virtue from Pope and Congreve, modesty from Moll Skerrett, and Doll Townsend, and piety from Hoadley and Lord Hervey, she did not cast down her eyes half so quakerlike, as she now did in the illustrious presence of Evelyn the fifth Marquis of Dorchester, and Duke of Kingston.

“Molly,” says my grandfather, “it is quite time that you should exhibit to the world, as the head of your own establishment, all the wit, and beauty, and accomplishments which I am happy to say you possess in a far greater degree than any other young lady that I have the honour of knowing.”

“Your grace says very true,” says my mother, with a curtsey, and a shy smile of self-approving love.

“Lady — and the Duchess of —,” pursued my lord, “were neither of them so old as you when they married, and I believe they are the envy of all the fashionable world.”

“Then the fashionable world,” says my mother, “must have a larger superabundance of envy than I thought it had, if it can throw any away upon such a miserable pair as that.”

“Why?” says my grandfather, looking quite innocent, and as if unconscious of the coming answer, though I think he guessed it.

“Why?” rejoined my lady; “because Lord A— has lost one nose, and will never get another, and the Duke of — is quite old enough to be his wife’s grandfather, and, what is worse still, is mean enough to be her duenna.”

“But, my dear Molly,” says the duke, “wives don’t marry for noses, but estates, and Lord —’s property is one of the very finest in England.”

“Ah,” says my mother, “I don’t find fault with the estate, but with the live stock that

goes with it. If one could keep the estate and bury the stock, it would be pleasant enough."

The reader will judge from this that Lady Mary Pierrepont was anything but a novice. Indeed she could not well be, for she had already had the benefit of some lessons from Bishop Burnett, who translated Epictetus for her, and then persuaded her she had done it herself. The Duke of Kingston thought it would be as well to come to the point

"Molly, my love," said he, "whatever mistaken notions you may entertain on these matters—and I can scarcely blame you, for you are very young—it will be as well to conceal them, at all events, just at present, for you are going to be married."

My mother started from her seat, as if she had been stung. This was an announcement she scarcely expected to hear. She knew her father's energy, but had not reckoned on its close advent. In an instant she composed herself; but there was a fiery agent at work within, of which my lord duke did not then dream. She was like the

river Nile, calm, and still, and stately ; you see it flowing grandly before you, in solemn silence and unruffled—the abode of peace and innocence. But there is a horrid alligator at the bottom of this majestic stream that will swallow you up, if you come near enough to molest, or even to look at him. Beware of him, O, wayfarer ! Even now his eye is upon you, and he waits for your approach ; there is death in this impassive deep. Advance no further, or you are undone.

“ And who, my lord,” inquired she, “ is the distinguished stranger of whom I am to be made the happy bewildered spouse ? ”

“ Lord —— ” says my grandfather, “ Lord —— , who loves you to madness.”

“ I wonder your lordship has not disentombed Henry VIII., and ordered me to marry him,” replied my mother. “ He would certainly be as agreeable to me as that loathsome old vampire, of whose madness indeed I never doubted.”

“ I would have done so, if I could,” answered the duke ; “ but it could not well be managed. However, as I cannot make you Queen of England ,

I have done the next best thing to it ; for Lord —— is certainly one of the most, if not the most powerful man in the country.”

“ I am surprised to hear that,” answered my mother. “ I should have thought the blow of a lady’s fan would have prostrated the wretched pigmy.”

“ A blow from *your* fan might,” rejoined the duke gallantly. And then as if meditating, he said, half to himself, “ he can’t live a year, and then what may she not command ? What rank too high for her to reach ?”

“ I trust your lordship will give me some time before I give you a final answer to this unexpected promotion—I mean, proposition,” says my mother with a feigned calmness.

“ Oh ! certainly,” answered the duke, “ any time you require ; only as you are to be married on Monday next, you need not prolong your meditation beyond that period.”

“ Monday next !” almost screamed my mother, “ and this is Thursday. Is your lordship really serious ?”

“ I am so serious,” answered my lord, “ that

the marriage settlements are all drawn—they are very different from that vagabond Montagu's notions—and only wait to be signed. Velours has already got orders to make up your wardrobe. It has cost me upwards of four hundred pounds. Your bridal jewels will be the finest in the kingdom, so you will have no trouble. My lord makes an absolute settlement on yourself of ten thousand a year, and if you present him with an heir, as if you are well advised you no doubt will, he increases it to fifteen thousand pounds per annum.”

“An heir!” cried my mother; “why, he is sixty-five.”

“Pooh,” says my lord duke, “*you* can get the old fool an heir.”

And rising very gracefully, he bowed my mother out of the room, with the dignified courtesy of any king but an English one.

My lord duke now ordered his coach, and proceeded to dinner in Cavendish Square with the noble lord, his intended son-in-law. The two passed a very delightful evening at the princely town mansion of the latter, though I blush to

say both got rather fuddled with frequent toasts. The bridegroom's health, the bride's happiness, an heir to the house of —, the glorious golden days of Charles Stuart and his Saturnalian friends, &c., &c., constituted the staple of their conversation, and lent ambrosial sweetness to the Champagne, the Burgundy, and claret. My lord duke was put to bed by his two servants at one o'clock in the morning ; in an hour or two afterwards my mother eloped, and was married to Edward Wortley Montagu, Esquire, second son of the Honourable Mr. Sidney Montagu, whose precious name I have now the pleasure to bear.

Thus my mother, for a whim, lost fifteen thousand pounds per annum—how nobly and splendidly that paradise income sounds—and I the satisfaction of being Lord —, with two castles, a palace in London, fifty footmen, and a dozen grinning lackeys, with M.P. tacked to their names. Such is Fate ! However I do believe I should have been happier and honester as a chimney sweep.

## CHAPTER II.

“But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife; she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”

EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU, Esq., Member of Parliament, Ambassador Extraordinary to the Sublime Porte, and I know and care not what else, was of a descent fully equal in heavenly grandeur to that of my most patrician grandfather on the maternal side, His Grace the Duke of Kingston. The Montagus, by the most undoubted evidence of Heralds and Kings-at-Arms, traced back their pedigree to Drogo de Montagu (in Latin, *De Monte Acuto*), of the county of Somerset, whose arms were azure, a

gryphon segreiant or ; though they afterwards quartered three fusils conjoined in fess, and an eagle displayed, emerald beaked and membered. After intermarrying with the daughters, or reputed daughters of kings, princes, earls, and grandees—I will not aver that grooms or footmen never intervened to poison the pure fountains of our blood—one of them became a duke (oh, rare !), and another, my immediate ancestor, an earl, for having faithfully betrayed the navy, with which the Commonwealth entrusted him, into the hands of His Serene Majesty, King Charles Stuart, then sojourning in Holland, and anxiously awaiting those golden pieces sent from England, which when they *did* arrive, gave such sovereign contentment to himself, his lords and ladies of degree. He was subsequently shot, or drowned, or stifled, in the sea fight at Southwold Bay, fought May 28, 1672, His Royal Highness the Duke of York having had the pleasure on that occasion of treating him with the most indecent scorn and contempt—a mark of royal favour which so preyed upon his sensitive heart, that it is supposed he threw away his noble existence

in disgust, or rage, or sorrow. He certainly deserved better from one for whose family he had risked, and lost all—that is, all that honourable men value; but *sic erat in fatis*, and I suppose it was right.

The Round heads and Republicans called him a traitor, and were base enough to exult in his reward, but this did not disturb his respected shade.

His second son, Sidney Montagu, was my father's father. He was a large, rough-looking man, as if he had some butcher's blood in him, with a huge flapped hat, a coarse, sensual face, a thick slobbering lip, a heavy cunning eye, and a tongue that perpetually rapped forth oaths, blasphemy, or ribald filth, the three brilliant graces which he had acquired in the court of his royal master, whom in our pure thanksgiving to God, we truly designate “our then most gracious Sovereign Lord, *thy* servant, King Charles the Second.”

He married a great heiress, the greatest, perhaps, in England at that time, for whom he professed the most fervent love, and by the will of

her father, Sir Francis Wortley, assumed her name in addition to his own. Thus he became Sidney Wortley Montagu, Esquire, of Wharncliffe Lodge, in the county of York, and of as many town houses as he could well like. This was a grand prize for him, but I fear it fared but sadly with the other party to this civil contract.

Like most young women who marry rakes, or hell fire spirits, she had the worst of the bargain. The partnership was unprofitable in the extreme. She was treated like a dog, or a king's consort, for the few short years she lived under his wing, was eventually separated from her lord, and never ceased regretting or cursing her fatal jump into the Etna of holy matrimony. She had better, indeed, have gone into Tartarus at once. But thus it always is, and thus may it always be, with such accursed nuptials. Nemesis avenges them if no other person does.

My father Edward, blessings on him! was the second and only surviving son of this cat and dog couple — the reformed rake, who was dissolute to the last, the happy bride who was for ever miser-

able. His own marriage in due time was quite as comfortable and auspicious as his father's.

The way in which this last named nuptial was brought to pass was thus. My father had a sister, Mrs. Anne Montagu, whom he very much regarded, for she bore a strong personal likeness to himself, and as he loved the original very much, he could scarcely help being partial to that which was its copy. Besides, she flattered him ; and worthless people are very partial to this species of luxury.

Mrs. Anne had got acquainted with my mother in some way that I have now forgotten. They presented a curious contrast ; almost as different as Harlequin and Pantaloön. Sallust says that to think the same and wish the same constitutes the basis of firm friendship. This may be true in politics—though, in politics, I don't believe friendship exists, albeit, hatred does ; but it is certainly not true in ordinary life ; for there we see that persons whose characters strikingly differ, are most often knit together by the strongest bonds that love, or money, or omnipotent and all pervading self-interest can fabricate.

Had Sallust been a mere scribbling puppy like Rapin, Tindal, or Defoe, I should not have expected better from him. These poor creatures dwell in garrets, engrimed in their dirty holes, like rats or spiders, and scrawl by the yard measure, copying from books because they have nothing else to copy from, though each one thinks himself a Tacitus at least. They enunciate state maxims about which they know and can know nothing from practical experience, and discourse of polity and law and government, the designs of kings and the conversation of councillors, when their sole subjects are the cats and rats, or the meaner vermin still to which they give support. But Sallust was of a different order. He himself had ruled and pillaged. He had been rake, blackguard and spendthrift, the *tria juncta in uno* which all modern history has shown can alone make perfect statesmen and diplomatists. He had gone through every shifting phase of the most refined rascality. Walpole, Wharton, Marlborough, or St. John, were not more wicked. How, therefore, he could have penned this folly has always

puzzled me. I rather fancy that he propounded the maxim, not as one that is generally true, but true only as it related to that fine faction of patrician scoundrels of which Cataline was the head and Cæsar the envenomed tail, and which so unfortunately for the first, and luckily for the last, was nipped in the bud by Cicero, who was himself a meaner and shabbier varlet than any one of those whom he so unceremoniously strangled.

My Lady Mary had at an early age begun to cultivate her talent for letter writing; that means she embellished all she heard with a purple tint of fable, and penned it down to her correspondents as veritable truth. This is what all epistolizers do, as the scandalized world no doubt will one day find out if Horry Walpole's gilt edged budgets of lies are printed by some son of Curril, for their edification. Every alternate sentence of that prince of cockle shells will prove to be either absolutely false, or horribly distorted from the fact, yet so nicely dovetailed into that which is really true, that only the wisest will not be deceived, and the general readers of the next

age will form the most erroneous notions of the leaders of this ; unless indeed some literary madman shall arise, and devote the whole of a frenzied life to find out that remnant of truth which will then be almost irrecoverable, and which if recovered will not be worth the paper on which it is writ.

She had run through Madam de Noyer's memoirs, and told her correspondents how insipid they were, because they did not detail intrigues. She had seen Nicolini as a naked savage strangling a lion, on which she wrote to her friends rather curiously than chastely. She romped with Nelly Willoughby, and entered into nice particulars of a tumble which Miss Hoyden got from the top of a wall, and when a fire happened at a neighbour's house she was witty on the flight *en chemise* of the frightened inmates. She poked into the New Atlantis, and knew all the secrets of that demure riddle as well as old Mother Manley herself, and when she got or wrote any loose lampoons she communicated them freely to her lady friends and correspondents. In a word she was a most delightful living edition of Count

Grammont, only that I think she was not half so guarded in her speech as that modest chronicler of the loves of St. James's. Among her cherished confidants was Mrs. Anne Wortley. Like all dull phlegmatic people, she was greatly pleased with the lively anecdotes, the touches of scandal, the vivid narrative, the neat jests and flippant double meanings, the graceful epigram in prose, which my mother flung from her with a careless inimitable art, that had all the fresh bloom of nature upon it. Of the truth or falsehood conveyed she never cared to enquire, but like all such human frogs, was pleased with what for the time enlivened her cold blood, and reduced others to her own stagnant level. She showed these light lampoons to her brother, who shared in her enjoyment, and began by degrees to feel a sort of frog-like attraction to the fair letter-writer. From this originated their first acquaintance, and Mrs. Anne was a decorous go-between, who fetched and carried messages, and nobody suspected the virgin prude to be as skilful in intrigue as the most finished abigail of the theatre.

Mrs. Anne Wortley was staid, grave, and I

fear stupid ; long-nosed, and lantern-jawed, like all our breed ; my lady Mary was arch, lively, bounding like Camilla in the *Æneid*, the embodiment of sprightliness and vivacity. Mrs. Anne had grave eyes, a solid chin, and a triangular face ; such people never laugh. Lady Mary had an oval face, and until she lost it, the prettiest little cock-up of a nose that can be conceived. Her lips and mouth seemed made for joyousness, her eyes were bright and piercing, and full of flashing lustre. Mrs. Anne in figure was like the moving sentry-box of leaves which covers Jack-o'-the-Green on May day ; she walked like an elephant. Lady Mary was graceful in form as one of Diana's nymphs—in form I say, for in nothing else could she resemble a follower of the huntress queen. Yet, this pair were really attached to each other, as I suppose a goose and a canary-bird might be.

Mr. Montagu and Lady Mary Pierrepont accidentally met in Mrs. Wortley's room one afternoon—he sick of Addison's conceit, she panting to enchain a man. The rich heir was at once fascinated by the fair lady. She limed him with

a glance, and the bird could not escape. In vain he summoned into memory all the grave lessons of caution which he had received from the right honourable Joseph, himself a hen-pecked husband and hater of the sex ; they were counterbalanced by lively Dick Steele's gay pictures of wedded bliss. In vain he brought before him all that Swift had vomited about those fair deities of dirt, who then constituted the fashionable world, and shone like firework stars around its galaxy ; the glittering outside of this new Calypso served but as a foil to what he for the moment regarded as the raving folly of a woman-scorning parson with a dirty cassock and a muddy face. They talked of love, money, politics, the court, and finally of Quintus Curtius. The lady declared she had never read him. This was true, and was a clever mode of announcing her knowledge of Latin. The lover was astonished to find a woman who could even read ; in those Saturnian times only a few could spell. A few days elapsed and she received a superb edition of that affected writer, with these lines—for which the impassioned lover paid some Grub-street Tasso half-

a-crown—neatly written on the leaf that faced the title page—

“ Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown  
The Macedon had laid his empire down,  
And polished Greece obeyed a barbarous throne.  
Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame  
The am’rous youth had lost his thirst for fame,  
Nor distant India sought through Syria’s plain ;  
But to the Muses stream with her had run  
And thought her lover more than Ammon’s son.”

The affectation and silliness of these love verses was a fit and proper prelude to the whole comedy in which this noble pair subsequently played the hero and heroine. A correspondence begun in falsehood could scarcely terminate in love. An oyster, indeed, was as capable of that ethereal passion as my father ; my mother could no more be inspired by it than the pearl which is that oyster’s prize and canker. The acquaintance, however, ripened into dunghill heat. Mr. Montagu was dry as tinder, and my Lady Mary as hot and fiery as ducal blood longing to burst forth upon the gabbling town in a gorgeous equipage could make her. As mushrooms grow up in a night, so did the all-powerful desire of cohesion within the beating hearts of this enamoured pair.

The lady longed for liberty, a town house, and a coach and six; the gentleman to own as one of his appendages, a slave in the shape of a woman who had knowledge, wit, and talent, and could write a whole page without violating grammar and orthography. So scarce a bird was then an ornithological curiosity—and we know what an Englishman will give for a rarity. They met, they glanced, they talked, and corresponded; each knew as if instinctively that real love had nothing to do with their commerce, yet they were attracted to each other as the amber and the thread, though every eye could see how widely the two differed. Mr. Montagu, however, with all his love, was no fool; he was as keen as a fox to all that affected his own interest. He was not so bewitched by the lady as to be blind to certain imperfections which disclosed themselves day by day; but he was one who hated to have a desire which he could not gratify. It is, indeed, a great hardship for a fine gentleman with unlimited wealth not to be able to do what he likes; it is one of the bores of existence which Providence ought to amend — Mr. Montagu

thought so. He coolly contemplated his condition, his mistress, and his heart ; he surveyed them as an anatomist the body which he is about to dissect. He was not perfectly satisfied with either, and he scarcely knew what to do. The lady was desirable, but settlements were stupid, and restraint rather disagreeable. But, then—he wanted a son to inherit his enormous wealth ; if it was to go anywhere, it were best to one of his own begetting ; he wanted a wife to rule his house and servants, who cost him a good deal of trouble, and to give him also a little personal distinction ; he could scarcely get one better suited for these worthy objects than the Lady Mary ; he wanted something to fill a void in his heart which sometimes made itself felt, notwithstanding Addison's parsonical prate, and he supposed a wife would do so. He was doomed to disappointment in all these three wishes. His son was exiled from his house, and was forbidden to be the recipient of his treasures ; he obtained a wife whom he separated from in a brief time, and kept at a most respectful distance all his life, who disgraced herself and the name she bore, and

never gave him but one day's pleasure ; he was deprived of all solid happiness through life, he lived despised, and died detested. His wealth went to the child of a villainous Scotsman who scorned him, and who was himself the scorn of mankind.

A sort of coy flirtation went on for two or three years between this accomplished pair. At the end of that time, Mrs. Wortley, the sister, died, and the lady began to write love letters to the brother. These epistles I have seen. They breathe in every line the insincerity of the writer ; the affectation of one who desires to be thought that which she is not. She lavishes praise on herself, with a profusion that exhibits the most eager desire to persuade her correspondent that she is all that can make him happiest of mortals. As Midas changed everything into gold on which he laid his finger, so she has but to point attention to any one of her numerous qualifications, and it straight stands forth splendid and beautiful. Other women are vain, light, frivolous, deceitful ; they love equipages and grandeur ; they are rebellious—shameful things—against

their husband's humours ; she is the perfect and infallible female destined to make his life one path of roses. Nobody was ever so disinterested as she is. She is all heart, feeling, purity, and truth. Her notions are modest to a nicety. She extravagant ! Heaven forefend the thought ! She can be content with love in the smallest cottage. She a lover of fine clothes and gilt coaches ! Oh ! blasphemous ! she is above all such nonsense. Apartments, table, pin-money, jewels, a train of grinning slaves in plush are things that never enter into her head. There is only one man of sense on earth. Him she loves, venerates, adores. Who can he be ? The receiver of the letter may, perhaps, faintly guess—but she will never name him—no, she will perish, sooner than divulge her passion. Does he find fault with her ? Alas ! he is deceived. He has entirely mistaken her character. She is a ready-made angel. But if she has any imperfections there is one man who can mould her to *his* way of thinking, until she shall outshine the Seraphim. What a mocking imp he must have been who sat and guided her pen as she wrote down all this ! But

was our ardent lover deceived by it? I scarcely think so. He had an immense fund of common sense, or rather that dullness which the world calls by that title; the society of wits in which he moved, and from whose light he derived a kind of borrowed lustre, had opened his eyes to all that was around him, and he was not to be taken in. The simplicity of Arcadia was scarcely then prevalent among the shepherds and shepherdesses of Saint James's, though in theory at least it was much admired. My father was an odd compound —such only as our English soil produces. For there are no people so eccentric as we are, with all our boasted solidity. The maddest things that have been done have been perpetrated by Englishmen. Need I mention Rochester, or Peterborough, or Wharton, in proof of what I say? Need I go over the scandalous chronicles of our insanity in love and war and gambling and domestic polity? This odd jumble of characters it was which made Mr. Montagu love and scorn Lady Mary almost in the same instant, and loathe himself for not being able to emerge from her fetters. He laboured hard to do so, but he failed

The fact is, she made up her mind to fascinate him, and she succeeded. He was not Ulysses enough to escape her spells, though he sailed before her with all the caution of the Prince of Ithaca. The Siren, however, prevailed over the wise man, and he was shipwrecked and drowned. Unhappy Sampson ! Wicked and ensnaring Dalilah !

There were two things which Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu loved with a devotion that never slept. The first was his own dear self; the second was his own darling money. These two idols formed to him the whole universe. The sun might shine, and the seasons might revolve, and the heavens might speak in tones of thunder, and flash in rays of lightning the wonders of the Supreme One, but all such objects were trivial and contemptible in the eyes and ears and thoughts of this distinguished man, as contrasted with the two main splendours of the earth, himself and his money, his money and himself. He had once told Addison, who wrote him a kind of half begging letter, complaining of the loss of his place and of his estate, that he himself “ had

once lived for six months on fifty pounds as pleasantly as ever he did in his life, and could have lived for less than half that sum, entertaining himself with the speech of Ofellus in the second satire of the second book ;”—an observation which coming from a man who could command the greatest wealth of any commoner then living, lets a whole flood of light in upon his true nature, and was as cool a mode of politely refusing by anticipation, that which he supposed his friend needed, as even Chesterfield himself would have applauded.

This intense love of money in so young a man became in time so absorbing that it swallowed up all minor passions, and the richest personage in England became the most greedy, covetous and mean ; guarding his gold as if it were his heart’s blood, and hating to think that anyone should ever possess that which he valued above all earthly, or even heavenly, things. But why name heavenly, when it was a word expressing an idea that he knew not ? Yet these two intense passions became for a period subordinate to a third, and that was a longing desire for Lady

Mary, which possessed him night and day, and which, although he wrestled stoutly against it, conquered him in the end. But his liking was shortlived. Even in the moment of possession she sickened and disgusted him. The temporary appetite disappeared for ever like a dream, and his true nature re-asserted dominion.

Pope, who was I think the dirtiest little dwarf of a varlet that ever hopped upon the earth, has drawn a portrait of Mr. Montagu and his wife, as they became developed in after years, when the ruling passion of both was in the ascendant, when even the pretence of liking would have sounded too absurd for either to make it, and all their bliss was placed in cursing me, and inwardly loathing each other as a pair of fiends.

“ Avidien or his wife, no matter which  
For him you’ll call a dog and her—  
Sell their presented partridges and fruits  
And humbly live on rabbits and on roots.  
One half pint bottle serves them both to dine,  
And is at once their vinegar and wine,  
But on some lucky day—as when they found  
A lost bank bill, or heard their son was drowned—  
At such a feast old vinegar to spare  
Is what two souls so generous cannot bear ;  
Oil though it stunk, they drop by drop impart  
But sowse the cabbage with a bounteous heart.”

This giant avarice when my father courted my mother was not yet fully grown. It was only in its cradle, but it was even then a youthful Hercules. Accordingly when the languishing lover waited on the Duke of Kingston to solicit the fair hand of Lady Mary, that illustrious peer put one or two inconvenient questions to our Leander which disgusted all the Cupid in his heart. He was his father's sole surviving son; the immense property of the unhappy heiress of the Wortleys, who had given herself and her dominions up to the debauched old ogre with the flapped hat, was so strictly settled on the issue male, that by no possibility could the aforesaid ogre, though very much inclined, dispose of any portion of it as he wished.

My lord Marquis—he was not made a duke till three or four years afterwards—accordingly began to stipulate that if the snowy hand—he did not mention the icy heart—of his beloved daughter Mary, who would be a treasure to a prince, was made over to the eager suitor, all the property of the Wortleys and Montagus combined should be settled on the heir male of the happy union. This

was the stern condition alone on which this loving parent would consent to be separated from a beloved child, the idol of his heart and home. But this condition by no means suited Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu. It seemed hard enough to him; he forgot at the moment the splendid prize he was soliciting. To part with his dearly beloved treasure, even in thought, was torture greater than any that the Inquisition had devised. Could it be recompensed by the possession of a few score pounds of human flesh and blood, even though both were highly noble. The matter was doubtful; he rather thought it an unfair proposal. He could not endure to dwell on the fancy that his gold, the lord god of his whole nature, should ever pass out of his grasp, even on parchment, much less could he bear the sight of one, who though already not in being (I mean my worthy self), would probably arise at some future day, *Exoriare aliquis ulti ex ossibus nostris*, and long for his death, as ardently as he now longed for the dissolution of the cruel old cannibal who had made his wife's existence a living hell upon earth, and who hated his son

and heir expectant with all the virulence of a Montagu.

The lover offered any reasonable amount of settlement upon the lady herself, for whom he had a sort of epicure's liking, or a museum maker's desire, but positively refused to endow his future offspring with a penny.

A fiery scene occurred. That the noble grandchild of a Pierrepont should be left to the caprice of a Montagu, was not to be listened to. The very suggestion was an insult, a degradation, a blow, and the father and future son-in-law parted with the most hearty hatred of each other, which like most hatreds, went with them unextinguished to the grave and worms.

Now came my lord's turn. He had long considered Lady Mary as a bore and spy upon his actions. He shunned her eye and feared her tongue, and dreaded her letter writing. She was too big to be a toy; she was too clever to be eluded by a fine gentleman who even still followed his gallantries; she was, worst of all, too old to be agreeable to the presence of a man who was as yet in his prime, and had no particu-

lar fancy for parading himself as some score of years more ancient than he looked, as the parent of grown up children must ever, it is to be regretted, be forced to appear. He had, besides, another spouse in view for himself, whom, indeed, he soon wedded—Lady Belle Bentinck, the youngest daughter of King William's Earl of Portland. The minister, too, urged him to make a profitable investment by means of his daughter ; and offended pride and awakened hatred stimulated him on to snatch this golden apple from the enraptured Mr. Montagu.

He lost no time, therefore, in patching up a contract with that illustrious peer of whom I have already made honourable mention, and as he never anticipated opposition, his rage at the disappointment of his hopes when my mother eloped may be more easily imagined than described.

Which of the parties gained on the whole by the proceeding would be a curious enquiry. I rather think it was my grandfather, for he got the dukedom.

The disappointed peer did not complain much ;

indeed his rottenness soon came to his relief, and carried him off, to the great joy of his heir.

Mr. Montagu succeeded in *his* wish—a wife without a settlement—but soon got sick of his toy, and panted in vain for single blessedness. The devil gave him wealth, but would not make him a widower—a very uncivil thing to do; but such things will happen.

## CHAPTER III.

“The men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.”

THE 12th of August, 1712, was a day memorable for many things, not the least of which was my mother’s marriage. She came to her husband, as she said herself, with only “a night-gown and a petticoat,” and she was probably agreeable enough for a few moments in these habiliments, but I never could discover that his passion survived the first four-and-twenty hours of their union.

In a month or two he sent her to a remote part of the country, while he himself wandered about to various places, now saying that he was elec-

tioneering, now engaged in visiting friends, who were to interfere between the two rival and angry fathers-in-law, now amusing himself in London, where he received his letters at Jacob Tonson's, opposite Catherine Street, in the Strand, now advertising for mortgages and young spendthrift heirs, who paid exorbitant interest for ready money. Never did any man more suddenly get cured than he did. But what discovery had he made that so suddenly sickened him of his fair bride? What damning fact transpired that put his love to flight in the hymeneal hour? Had my lady—? But no; these things can be only matter of guess. Nor is it for me to search too deeply into this abstruse enquiry. Certain it is that he would have given a large sum to be free again. He left her, and with ill concealed scorn. She, meanwhile, boxed up somewhere in the country, far remote from civilization, and the squares in which she had so longed to glitter, sent him every day the most bitter complaints of headache, spleen, and want of sleep. But he treated all such nonsense with contempt, or with that fine stoicism which Addison, who consoled him-

self over a bottle for his own domestic mishaps with Lady Warwick, had taught him, and which he now for the first time felt that he could practise. He did not condescend to write even a single line, nor send one consoling message, though her peevishness increased, her melancholy augmented, and her letters grew more frequent. I was born, but even this made no change. The result, as might have been expected, was this—Lady Mary hated her husband, and cared very little what she did out of malice or revenge.

My father's cousin, Charles Montagu, having some time before this been made Earl of Halifax, Knight of the Garter—that sure badge of virtue and nobleness—and first Lord of the Treasury, our family star was at its zenith, and my father was made one of the Lords Commissioners. On the Earl's death and Walpole's succession, the embassy to Constantinople was given to Mr. Montagu, as a special token of courtly approbation, or, as some said, a courtly mode of banishment. I don't know why he selected it, if indeed it was his own choice at all. A gentleman less

imbued with orientalism never lived. But like his mad marriage, it was probably one of his eccentric crotchets, and he resolved to indulge it. The jewelled East perhaps had charms for his golden thirst. Could he have left his wife behind I have no doubt he would; why he did not I can scarcely tell. I suppose there were reasons —there always are. I wish he had, though I suppose that as accidents will arise in the best regulated families, and with the best conducted footmen, the same mishap which befel her afterwards in the royal seraglio would have happened had she been left alone in England.

We packed up our baggage and departed. This was in 1716, when I was not three years old. Of our adventures on the road and during our stay in Stamboul, I can of course personally know nothing, nor do I indeed know very much more than all the readers of Lady Mary's letters. Whatever will bear publication appears there; all that will not bear it is penned, I suppose, in another book, and will be read out in thunders on the last day—if such a horrid event should ever

happen. It will be rather a startling investigation into the high-bred secrets of high-bred sinners.

My lady corresponded during the whole period with Walpole's mistress, Poll Skerret ;—received the most disgraceful love letters from Mr. Pope, who was a prostitute of another kind, though just as odious—laughed at the images of Jesus Christ in the chapels, and particularly at the full-bottomed wigs in which they were arrayed ; sneered at the ugly Austrian dames in paint and whalebone petticoats ; had an offer made to her of his heart and person during her stay in Vienna by a young Count Somebody, which she protested she refused, poor Mr. Wortley having been consulted by neither in this little arrangement, and finally visited the seraglio of the Sultan, where a trifling matter occurred which gave the crowning blow to all her nuptial happiness. I believe she and Mr. Wortley Montagu never cohabited together after that.

The Ambassador was recalled in 1717, but out of sullenness or fear of scandal and the tongue of the wits, his dear friends, or some other eccentric

English crotchet, he did not come back until 1718, when he probably thought my lady's folly had been forgotten in the five hundred similar ones that had happened in the interval. They were immediately surrounded by a gang of flatterers, knaves, authors, and fine ladies—corpses covered with pearls—who then constituted the finest ornament of fashionable society. Among these choice and faithful friends, two in particular distinguished themselves—Pope and Congreve, the former labouring with all his might to seduce my mother by his artful tongue, as he had previously laid the basis for it by his flattering pen; and the latter aiding him to corrupt her mind still more than it previously had been by her association with bishops, courtiers, and courtesans.

What fine people there were in those days, and how my heart swells as I think of them and their byegone splendours. Providence, I suppose, had scarcely ever before collected a greater number of worthless villains, harridans, and scoundrels, without hanging or transporting more than three-fourths of them. The best deserved to be broken on the wheel. Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, and

Normanby, commonly called John of Bucks, was at their head ; an atheist, full of the notions of Hobbes ; a libertine, stuffed with the principles of Rochester ; a cheat in everything where money was concerned. Prior, vain, sensual, sordid in his intrigues, cohabiting with a scullion, on whom he lavished his money and his poetry, may be said to have brought up the tail. Congreve, with eyes full of pride and lasciviousness, conceited, worthless, and selfish ; utterly profligate in his private life, and so great a braggart, that scarcely anything he said could be credited ; Addison, a crawling sycophant, full of envy and spleen ; frantic when a friend prospered ; happy only when misfortune lighted on his associates ; a hypocrite who would take you by the hand, and if he heard you utter a sentiment which in his heart he knew to be erroneous, would labour to confirm you in it with all his zeal, rejoicing in your inexperience, as Satan might exult over the fall of a young novice. Pope, who was all malice, hatred, and uncharitableness ; false as a Jesuit ; fickle as a fool ; mercenary as a waiting woman ; and with a prurient fancy, which, had his body

permitted it, would have led him into excesses as gross as any that Chartres was accused of. The Duke of Wharton, now in the full glory of his profligacy, at the head of his club called “Schemers,” who openly avowed that the ruin of women constituted the sole tie that bound them together, and who for that reason alone were sought after, caressed, and hunted by all the silly simpletons in town. Garth, whose entire discourse was dissolute as his manners were profligate, and who laughed at all religion as a sham ; Kneller, gross and vain, and venom-tempered ; Cooper, afterwards Lord Chancellor, who had two living wives ; a minister of the law, and a keeper of the king’s conscience, who set the statutes against bigamy at defiance, and was only liable to death for felony on the prosecution of any one who could bring home the well known charge. Townsend, the brother-in-law of Walpole, and his brazen countess—immortalised to infamy by my cousin Fielding, as Lady Bellaston in *Tom Jones*—with Sunderland the knave, and Craggs, the stock jobber, who died just in time to escape the universal infamy which fell upon all connected

with the South Sea swindle. But why go through this Newgate Calendar, or enumerate the twelve tribes of villain statesmen and loathsome rakes, with Iscariot Walpole for their Alpha and Omega, with whom my lady was brought perpetually into contact? Why follow her to the Prince's, where she sought to ingratiate herself with the heir apparent; and when that failed, why pursue her to the court, where she herself became half domesticated with Schulenberg and Kilmansegg, and Platen, horrible queans, who would not have been endured in any decent company, but for the protection of the hideous old sovereign? A more detestable academy for a young wife to enter cannot be imagined. It set the final seal on my mother's principles, and ruined her; and what before might have been accidental was now confirmed vice.

I have drawn a pleasing picture of aristocratic life in England sixty years ago. The colours are sombre, the tints are dark, it must be owned. But I write with the pencil of historic truth. I have shewn the inside of these men whom biographers, essayists, and historians will doubt-

less paint with shining colours, bringing out all their prominent virtues with fine gold, and covering the gorgeous canvass with glaze and varnish, and many a parting touch of purest light. I shall be called a misanthropist. Well ! I *do* hate mankind, but it is mankind constituted of rogues and rascals. I shall be denounced as a satirist. There is no reproach in the title. Far more disgraceful, it seems to me, to be like Burnet, the panegyrist of vice and corrupt power, than the dread anatomist of its horrors. I have nothing to gain by speaking thus plainly ; I have everything to lose, for men conspire against all who tell them disagreeable truths. And what can be more galling to the good—for I suppose there are some hidden in the un known regions—than to have their dreams dispelled, their belief in virtue dissolved in thin air ? This was the last sigh of Brutus—his last and bitterest, no doubt. I suppose he once believed in virtue ; I would do so too if I had ever seen her. For my whole life I have been reading and hearing of her, but like Echo, the shy nymph has never revealed herself before me, but wan-

dered farther away the more I sought her in her choice retreats.

The truth is, civilised society seems to me like a picture of Hell in little. Virtue is extinct. Falsehood and Heartlessness are the universal rulers. There is not a man or woman that I meet who is not masked. As in the great carnival, every one assumes a character which is not his own, so it is in towns and cities. The young are caught by externals ; they think the dress and outside represent the inner man ; but they wake from their delusion at some period, and find that all is theatrical—that nobody is what he appears to be ; that men are base under the most honourable trappings, and women are vile under the most snowy veils. Hence I have ever shunned the sinning crowd—myself perhaps as bad as they—but still I longed to separate from them. I have sought repose in the East and West ; in the mountains, and the wilderness. I have not found them, and I never shall ; but if I am to move amidst the vicious, give me at least the vices of the desert, which are open, brave, and daring vices, and not like the sneaking crimes

of polished men. England, at the period of which I now write, was the ape of France, and as almost every crime which Juvenal enumerates, or Suetonius describes, or man imagines, was practised with open impunity by the Gauls; so it came to pass that in our own country also —ever its servile imitator—it was thought unfashionable to be decent, and good breeding to be impious. Why, oh! why, thou sacred Heaven, is human nature so depraved as to be perpetually plotting evil for others? Here was a young woman, who might even yet have been virtuous, and certainly was fascinating, flung into a whirlpool from which it was almost impossible to escape, while those—her superiors in years or judgment—who might have lent her a helping hand out of it, only sought to thrust her deeper downwards into the abyss. What a base heart must he possess, who for a paltry momentary gratification, corrupts a human soul into an instrument fitting his purposes, and coolly meditates the overthrow of an immortal essence, simply for the indulgence of a brief and transitory fancy. Yet is not this the picture daily shown before man-

kind? Send a young virgin out alone, and for one who will have pity on her years five hundred will allure her to her ruin. Entrust your son with a bag of gold, and for one who will counsel prudence, he will meet five hundred who will tempt him into profligacy. Go thyself into the highways and byways, and for one who will exhibit friendship, kindness, or fidelity, thou shalt be surrounded by five hundred who will betray, deceive, and destroy; and all this apparently for the slightest gain—most certainly for no reward in anyway equal to the diabolical zeal with which they execute their work. Yet to resist and overcome such is the great battle of life, and grand indeed is the wreath of victory for him who conquers. O Man! the days of chivalry are not departed; the race of knight errants is not extinct. Thou art thyself in every moment of thy career, the knight of the bleeding heart, and canst travel nowhere without meeting monsters or damsels in distress. Out with thy good sword, and with shield over thy breast charge upon thine enemy. He appears before thee, an enchanter in disguise, with fair words, and sweet smiles, and

hermit garb, but is it not thus we know that all the arch-magicians sought to compass the ruin of the brave and gallant? Instead of woods and forests, he now betakes himself to squares and drawing-rooms; instead of brazen castles he harbours in courts and senates, and in the golden mart. Think not that he is less wily or dangerous than when he came as in the olden time. I tell thee he is a hundredfold more dreadful than in the days gone bye, for instead of the bold and daring front which he then assumed, or of the fiery dragon on which he then rode, he now has gathered deeper cunning from his years, and clothes himself in the most peaceful garb, and the most bewitching smiles; nay, he bears a lamb about with him in his journeys, as an emblem of the truth and innocence that is in his heart.

## CHAPTER IV.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. . . . And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a fiery furnace.”

I suppose I need not describe our grand house in Cavendish Square; we had a drawing room and a library and a billiard room; a public dining room and a private dining room, and a picture gallery, and a red saloon, and a breakfast room, and a blue chamber, and I know not how many writing closets and ante rooms, and other fine places, all of which, however, looked grim and desolate, and dirty enough—vast Saharas in the heart of London. Wherever you glanced there were family portraits, hard faced men in peri-

wigs, and brazen eyed men in helmets and shining breastplates, and some in ruffs and scarves and doublets, and horrid monsters in china, and blue jars like those that hid the band of robbers in Ali-Baba, and huge fireplaces in which a fire was never lighted, and great sconces in which candles were never lit, and vast mirrors in which a smiling, happy countenance was never seen. Mould and mustiness and solitude combined to make the home a horror. For this mansion was in truth the chosen abode of Misery in the august person of my honoured father, and if I were writing an allegorical poem like Ovid—but I hate that affected fop—I might describe it with many poetical particulars, which as I am neither a Naso nor a Spenser, are thus for ever lost to the world. The servants were wretched scarecrows, as tall and thin as the poor apothecary in Romeo and Juliet ; the blinds were usually undrawn, so that a dim, cavernous twilight pervaded the whole house ; there was not even the song of a bird, the friendly footstep of a dog, or the comfortable mew of a cat heard in this great silent labyrinth ; for our ex-Lord of the Treasury was too prudent

to invest money, or to squander it in such idle, vain accessories as these. I only wonder that he did not scrape the gold off the frames, and sell all the Indian monkeys for whatever they would fetch, for I know he hated to look at their distorted features. I suppose he would have done so if he dared, but my lady, though as musical as any nightingale of Parnassus, had a tongue—and when she *did* speak, she could make its music ring like the baying of a pack in full cry. Yet why should she not? Were not female tongues formed for this purpose?

How well I can remember the feeling with which I used to steal about the great staircases, in the wretched twilight, half afraid of the ugly, black, begrimed male savages on canvass, who glowered like ogres of the olden time out of the dusky corners—Calibans and demons to my young imagination. Sometimes I stopped and contemplated the female portraits, as if I could receive from them that sweet music of sympathy for which my heart so ardently longed. I have gone up to them when I was unobserved and kissed their cold red lips, and wondered why they

did not open their arms to me, and why their eyes were still and lifeless, when mine flashed with tears, and my heart leaped within me for a kindred heart. But there they were, as impassive as death itself. Then I would retreat into a corner and cry like a fool, and wonder were all other boys as unhappy and lonely and uncared for as myself, and were all other fathers and mothers such stocks and stones as mine appeared to be. There was not a single creature in the whole house with one human sympathy; for whom I cared, or who cared for me, except indeed a black named Jupiter, who often comforted me when he saw me weeping, and in his own wild way made me weep more still, for I knew that he pitied me, and this caused my tears to flow forth afresh. During my whole boyhood, or at least as much of it as I passed in this catacomb, I never remember to have heard an honest, hearty burst of laughter, or one merry song from the lips of our domestics. A cold chain of depression seemed to be thrown over the spirits of all; they went through their work like automata. Perpetual silence reigned. My father, glum, gloomy, taciturn,

turn as a marble statue, chilled everyone into torpidity ; my mother did not dare to let her natural spirits flow forth, but curbed them until she visited abroad, when they ran loose, and I fear, turbid. And every night we had prayers—but here I must stop. The recollection of this dreary farce, for such it was, makes me perfectly sick at heart.

What wretched things our breakfasts were ! My father sat with a pile of papers beside him, over which he was busily engaged. There were mortgages, leases, bills, and bonds, and promissory notes, and all sorts of securities for money, wherein he held imprisoned the souls of debtors ; noble lords, and mighty commoners. These he contemplated with his pale eyes and yellow smile, as God might contemplate a Paradise filled with beautiful, happy spirits. They were his all ; his world, his belief, his faith, his life, his religion. The stout oak boxes in which they were secured by double and treble locks were duly opened ; the rich securities for gold that increased itself twenty-fold as every year revolved, were drawn forth and contemplated with an ever new feeling

of delight ; gorgeous visions of money, money, money, arose in the mind of the covetous man ; and he seemed like Jupiter seated on Olympus, and revelling in the consciousness of strength and power. Lady Mary sat opposite and served him with his chocolate, herself as silent as her lord, dreaming, I suppose, of new conquests, or new lampoons ; how to lure this man of fashion into a declaration ; how to crush this rival dame into the hell of the damned. Between them was the writer of this, scarcely daring to lift up his eyes. To intrude upon this awful silence would be like the crime of him of old, who broke in upon the Sacred Mysteries, and was torn in pieces for his pains. The bleeding features of Medusa had not a more freezing effect than my father's presence ; if, like Midas, all that he touched was changed into gold, like the head of the Gorgon, all that he looked at was petrified into cold stone. Yet all this exquisite rapture about his money and its quick increase was not without certain drawbacks. Truly did the wise Saxon of old say, no joy without alloy—a sentiment for which I can scarcely suppose that he

travelled to Pagan Rome to steal it, though the sage Lucretius delivers it to us in other and more poetical language, when he says that “even out of the midst of pleasure’s fountain, something bitter will arise.” This, you, my dear sir, have probably yourself experienced, and why should not our Saxon ancestors? Nor do I suppose that there lives a single man at this moment whose own heart has not taught it to him as a sad truth. I know, indeed that Miss Jones felt it, when she gave herself, sweet pretty cherub, and sixty thousand pounds to Saltash of the household troops, and found in a little time that the fascinating young Phœbus, who had appeared to her dazzled imagination something only just beneath an angel of heaven, was a heavy, stupid, sottish, self-loving fool, who cared for nothing on earth but stuffing his own paunch and perfuming his own hair, and curling his big whiskers, and making love to all the silly nursery maids he met. And I know also that Lord John Apollo, who flew into the country, disgusted with Mayfair beauty, and sought in a sequestered hamlet in Shropshire for youth, innocence, and virgin purity,

and found it as he thought, under a very plain cottage roof, was rather amazed in a few months to discover that his sweet Amanda, who had appeared the most fairy-like, amiable, and artless of all rustic nymphs, was as cold, vain, selfish, tricky, and false hearted as the finest fashionable siren on the town. No wonder, then, that the Honourable Edward Wortley Montagu was not exempt from trials, and felt, like Alexander the Great, that he was but a mortal man, after all.

And he had them. Such trials!—alas! that it should be said of the owner of thirty thousand pounds per annum. If rich, miserly men had only money to receive, what a splendid sphere this earth would be for them. But, ah me! in this world we not only get, but we have to give money. This is the bitter pill—the poison in our golden cup. Could you and I, my dear Crœsus, go on from year to year, cramming and gorging our leathern purses or our pocket books with notes, notes, silvery, crisp notes, still and ever fresh from the Bank of England, I am afraid we should never want to die, and we should be very much disinclined to make way at all for

our successors ; nay, we should consider them the most unreasonable, usurping scoundrels unhang'd. But unfortunately, as fast as money flows in, it flows out also. We have house rent and taxes, and a confounded wine merchant, and a rascally tailor, and an unconscionable boot-maker, and half a million other knaves and rogues, who are perpetually drawing upon our golden fountains, till they dry much faster than they fill. And though our case is melancholy in the extreme, still more to be pitied are those unhappy wretches who have wives and children, for though it certainly is a hard condition enough that we should be compelled to pay our own bills, can anything be a greater bore than to have to pay for our big Tom at Eton or Oxford, whom it takes the best part of a thousand to feed and clothe, and who is not half so useful to us as our horse, or our pretty, sweet, smiling Bessy and Fanny, who look upon their very respectable parent as nothing but a milch cow, sent by kind Heaven into the world for the sole purpose of giving the pretty creatures an unlimited supply of bonnets, gloves, silk stockings, corsets, jewelry,

and fine dresses ? These I say are indeed melancholy considerations, and I am afraid they press more heavily on the rich than the very poor, which is a manifest injustice on the part of Providence.

My father's life journey, therefore, was by no means amid roses—there were several nasty thorns in his path, which bored him immensely. Had he been single he would have been all right. He could have passed all his days with Addison or Congreve, at Wills' or Button's; and all his nights with Steele at the theatre, for which he could have got a free admission. But he was not single; he had a wife, unhappy man ! with a thousand grasping wants, passions, feelings, emotions, pleasures, that must be gratified, or if they were not, why then, the world must come to an end, and where would *he* be ? For my lady never forgot that she was a duke's daughter, and though that was to some extent a feather in his cap, yet did it entail further and greater expenses than if she had been the child of a simple commoner, a poor unknown devil, whom the Rev. Mr. Jacob would despise. As a bachelor, a

pleasant suite of chambers would have suited him admirably; a slight flirtation with one of Cibber's actresses, that would not have cost very much, would have sufficed when he was melancholy—but as a husband and father, an equipage, servants, an imposing mansion, and all the other expensive appendages of his position were absolutely needed, and sorely did they all grate against his philosophy. However, as he *had* committed the egregious folly of marriage, and as he was bothered with these abominable consequences incident to it, he resolved to make the best of his position, and to pinch, starve, screw, and save in every conceivable way, so that he might make the greatest appearance with the least possible expense. And it was this pinching, starving, screwing, and saving which made the rich man's life as wretched as a toad's in a hole—nay probably more so, for I believe the toad is content, but Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, senior, was not content. He had great moments of joy indeed, and those were when he received money, which he got in bundles and bundles; but to make up for these Elysian moments, there

were others of great unhappiness, and these were when he had to disburse small portions of these very bundles in the payment of his just debts.

“Madam,” he would say, “here is another milliner’s bill—am I never to have done with paying for your cursed folly and extravagance? The last was—let me see—not two months ago, and I had then to pay one hundred and twenty-nine pounds, three shillings, and fourpence. Here is one to-day, in which I find seventeen pounds charged for a ball dress, and six pounds ten for one of those silly turbans that make you look so damned hideous. Then I paid Flash, the Jew crayon painter, fourteen pounds for a very ugly likeness of yourself, drawn, I think, when you had the jaundice; and Flimsy, the toymen, sixty-seven pounds for some frippery, which I suppose you think sets you off like a sovereign queen. Then, Madam, you have a dentist—though I don’t know what for, as he cannot preserve your teeth, and a doctor, and an apothecary, and a nurse, and a shoemaker, and a hosier, and a doxy of a seamstress who never seems to have done with mending and making,

and a plumasier—though what you want with the peacock's feathers, except to cover over your jackdaw appearance, I know not—and a glover; fifteen pounds four in one quarter of a year for gloves—and a perfumer (I don't think cosmetics become you), and a couple of lazy trollops, who call themselves your maids; and then you have a stock-broker, and a corn cutter, and the devil knows what besides, so that I am fairly pillaged by the train of robbers that you feed. You should remember that when you came to me with only your smock, you never hinted that I was to pay so dearly for the pleasure of giving you my name."

And Lady Mary would remain silent. She feared no one in the world but one man, and this was my father. He had thoroughly broken in and cowed her. She was tamer than a cat before him.

Then he would resume in the old strain—

“Here is Timms writes up from Twickenham that one of the cows is dead; that is a loss of twenty pounds. What shall I do? I shall be beggared at this rate among you. And there is

a new roof wanted to the stable, and one of the doors has come away from the piggery, and the scoundrels still continue poaching, and one of my best dogs was poisoned last week. But you have no sympathy for all this—you have no more feeling than a sow. You think only of your damned balls and beaux. I thought you were too old for such nonsense. You remind me of the proverb, madam, ‘Many a fool have I seen, but an old fool like this never.’ And what the deuce good is Lord Hervey to you? And the Duke of Wharton—why, he makes you his public laughing stock. ‘Old Moll,’ he says, ‘thinks I care for her; damme, I should as soon think of caring for old Noll.’ And then he drinks damnation to the Protector, and says, ‘The king shall have his own again.’ Do you know, madam, that I have not had a tailor’s bill myself for the last three years, while you are dressed up every week in new finery? And I could restock my farm for half the money that you spend in Japanese ogres and four-footed demons in porcelain. I shall be beggared by you in the end, I know. Then there is this young scoundrel, a true

imp of your own breeding. (This, gentle reader, referred to me; but you mustn't believe I was either imp or scoundrel, though my honoured father said so.) I find he is perpetually flinging stones and breaking windows. I have had to pay five glazier's bills for him in the last three weeks; this shows your careful training of him. But I suppose he will come to the gallows. He has ridden two ponies to death; he knocked down a pedlar, and spoilt his box of goods, for which I had to pay three and tenpence damages; he has run up a bill at the baker's for sweet cakes, which will soon bring him under the clutches of one of your blood-sucking apothecaries, and there will be a long account sent in. How the devil, madam, can any fortune stand up against this? Only that you save three hundred a year out of the five hundred which the chancellor allows you for keeping your lunatic sister, I don't know where we should be. You look as if you thought my bonds and speculations produced thousands. Well, they certainly do; but then they ought to produce tens of thousands, and I don't see what benefit I gain, if, while I make money with one

hand, you and this imp lavish it away with another. Henceforward, madam, it is my command that you spend only a hundred a year on Lady Mar, and save all the rest; indeed, I don't see why you cannot support her well for a guinea a week, for as she lives in the garret here, there is no house rent or servant's wages, and surely that is enough to clothe a mad woman."

Then the house steward would be called, and addressed as follows:—

“ Wilkins, I fear you are a regular rogue. I have been overhauling some bills, and I find I am cheated right and left. There is coals thirty-five pounds fourteen shillings and sevenpence. Why, the house must be as hot as hell with all these fires. What do you mean, sir, by letting the servants go on in this way? Do you suppose I am made of money? I certainly should be so to satisfy such gross extravagance. Then I find a butcher's bill, one hundred and fifteen pounds, two shillings and sixpence halfpenny. How is this? Where, when, why, how was all this meat eaten? It is enough to feed a regiment. I suppose all the vagabonds in the neighbourhood dine

at my expense. And how much of this goes into your own pocket as per centage ? You're a rogue, sir, and you look like a damned extravagant one. Have I not told you over and over again that I will not allow the servants to cram and stuff at this rate ? Why they live on venison, I suppose —venison and claret ; nothing else will satisfy their nasty bellies. There is a beer bill, forty-seven pounds nine shillings. Good God ! is all this gone in beer ? Why the servants must be always drunk ; and you, sir, look as if you were drunk at this moment. No wonder I am pillaged in this way, when the person who ought to overlook these villains is himself guzzling from morning till night. Do you know what the chandler's bill comes to ?—seventy-eight pounds thirteen shillings and elevenpence farthing. Soap and candles. Why I would contract to supply a whole barrack with both for that sum. Leave the room, sir, and go at once to every one of these ruffians and deduct five-and-twenty per cent. from their bills and pay them, and bring me back the receipts.

“ And now, madam,” turning to Lady Mary,

“ what are you going to do for the day ? Intent on gadding, I suppose ? Gad where you like, but don’t lay out money. I will stand any of your follies, madam, but by G— I will not stand this. You know your father will not give us a penny ; he spends it on his mistress. It is your duty, then, as you came to me penniless, to make up for it in thrift. But I may as well preach to a deaf man as talk to you of saving. Have you considered what I said about your sister ? She can live splendidly on a guinea a week. Let her have a mutton chop or two now and then ; fish is cheap and wholesome ; she can occasionally have a pudding. Let her drink be water, for this cools the brain. Any fermented liquor will only kill her. Now, madam, can you not supply her well with these articles for five or six shillings a week ? Her clothes, I suppose, will be ten pounds a year ; her washing about as much. What more can she want ? Oh ! a servant. Well, have we not a horde of lazy servants ? What can she require a servant for ? Her apothecary’s bill ought not to be more than a guinea or two ; indeed, she will not want any drugs at all if you

feed her on plain, wholesome food. Thus, madam, you might save four hundred and fifty pounds a year, which you could have for your own pleasures—I mean your own pin money, without making these everlasting demands on me, which I am resolved I will no longer satisfy. Then why don't you win from Wharton? That is the least you may do to repay yourself for his laughter. I am sure your skill at cards is deep enough; and the fool is spending all his money on worse foibles than these. What good is he to you unless you win his gold?"

These, the reader will say, were wretched scenes. Indeed they were; yet they were of daily occurrence. The lessons of thrift perpetually dinned into Lady Mary's ears by a husband who almost denied himself the common necessaries of life, produced their effect, and she at length became as miserly and grasping as her tutor. She hated to part with a sixpence. She would hoard and hoard small sums, and though constantly dunned for debts which she ought to have discharged long ago, she could not induce her hand to open her purse strings, but put off the wretched

creditor until he was tired of asking, and often gave up the debt in despair or disgust, or forgetfulness, if it were a small sum. And this, I believe, is a trick with many fine people ; for tradesmen in a large way of business cannot constantly be examining their books for small balances over due ; or if they can it is not worth their while to send half a dozen times as many miles for these wretched items. Thus they are eventually forgotten or abandoned, and the miser finds himself at the year's end some four or five pounds richer, whereat he hugs himself with joy, and resolves to cheat twenty other tradesmen in the same way for the next twelve months out of small sums. And so it goes on, and at the end of twenty or thirty years he has gained by dirty plunder of this kind perhaps four or five hundred pounds, which is carefully stowed away, with all his other ill got savings, until gaunt Death walks in and bears him off as ruthlessly as a hawk snaps up a sparrow, or the lordly gamecock picks a grub from the dunghill ; and his heir, finding this five hundred among the rest, gives it to some procuress, or spends it on a single cast of faro,

and it goes at once to the devil, where its first owner had preceded it, and its new master will probably follow.

Being thus perpetually tormented about economy, and having dinned daily into her impatient ears the necessity of saving, Lady Mary was obliged to get money for her pleasures how she could ; for she had a truly ducal set of passions which craved to be fed, and were very indignant when they could not be gratified. She had already half starved poor Lady Marr, and out of the five hundred pounds set apart for her support, at least saved four. This was very well, but ducal appetites need something more than this paltry food. She then took to gambling, and as she did not much care what she did, she won immensely for a short time, until at last people began to suspect that there was more than met the eye in this uncommon amount of good luck, and the wise declared off accordingly, leaving only the young fools to be her antagonists, who were glad to lose their money to a wit, a fine lady, and a duke's daughter. But this was after all only a precarious resource, so she began

to dabble in the stocks, and here her acquaintance with Craggs was of great advantage to her. This fellow's father had been a common pandar to the Duke of York or any other great lord who would pay him, and as he did not lack shrewdness, he scraped up a vast deal of money, which he freely expended in the education of his only son, hoping to see him Prime Minister, perhaps ; at all events, high in the administration of this happily-governed land. And he succeeded in his wish. Young Craggs was handsome, and with a good porter-like person. Young women about the Court took a liking to him ; he had great calves, a broad back, a body like an Irish chairman, and was, moreover, not very choice about trifles ; and owning a seat in Parliament, he absolutely became one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, to the wonder of all who remembered the unhallowed trade of his revered father, but not at all to the astonishment of those who were behind the scenes, and knew the pliancy of the young gentleman, and his convenient subserviency to such people as Kendal and Kilmausegg. This man my Lady Mary greatly courted.

Alas ! do not blame her. Did not Pope and Swift and Harley, and the king, and two hundred members of Parliament, and fifty or sixty heaven born children of the Upper House, with stars, garters, ribbons, and long pedigrees, do the same ? Why, then, pour all the vials of wrath upon a weak woman ? But I know you will not ; you are too good natured ; you yourself despise a lord and right honourable, but you have mercy on those who adore and kneel before them. Lady Mary courted him, then, and as Craggs was always buying and selling, and scheming and speculating, and possessed, as a cabinet minister, means of knowledge such as no other person had, he was usually successful in his stock exchange commerce, and they to whom he gave hints were successful also. Was it wrong ? Well I don't know. The world agrees to say yes, and I suppose the world is right ; but I shall not enter into the question. Suffice it to say if it was wrong it was pleasant. Yes, by Plutus ! pleasant in the extreme. For show me the parallel on earth of that ecstatic joy which, like Venus from the ocean, is born out of cent. per cent. ; the rapture

with which I, who have invested a thousand pounds, suddenly find myself without any care, or thought, or trouble, or toil, the happy master of five thousand guineas, all bright, golden, shining, beautiful as God himself. Talk of the wedding day and successful love, and the joy of an heir, and the rational delight felt and experienced at your rich father's sudden death, and the triumph of a successful speech in Parliament, and the rapture of intoxication born out of ambrosial Burgundy, and the joy one feels when his shrew of a wife runs away with a wealthy simpleton who can pay three thousand pounds in damages, and the ecstatic dreams of Quixotism, and the glorious uprising of a blessed spirit into the light of paradise, and the white robed seraphs of the celestial. All these, I suppose, are very fine, but is there one man on earth who would be donkey enough to barter these for the transporting bliss which that happy mortal feels who having given twenty thousand guineas to his broker, wakes up next day and finds himself owner of a plum—yes, a plum value one hundred thousand solid pounds.

So felt and thought Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—so felt and thought that lively Frenchman, Monsieur Achille, Hannibal, Cæsar, Charlemagne Ruremonde, my lady's dark-eyed friend and lover. For he was both. What is the good of denying it? Ruremonde was master of ten thousand pounds ; when, or where, or how acquired, only Heaven knows, and no doubt it was registered above in some awful book. But that he had it was certain ; that he was a vain, volatile, conceited fool was equally matter of mathematical demonstration. He was a small, fiery man, with a big nose, ferocious, flashing eyes, a terrible big moustache ; he dressed with great elegance, had a fine taste in perfumes ; was ringed, curled, ringleted, scented, and even washed to perfection. He fell in love with Lady Mary. He was a Frenchman, and had but to whistle after any woman, and she was his, so he believed—but like many another frail mortal, he was deceived by his self-love. Had my lady been the Virgin Mary he would not have doubted that he could conquer, for what Frenchman ever distrusted his sweet seductive powers of fascination ? But it was the

lady who fooled him to the top of his bent; she turned him inside out like an old glove. She had no serious notion of breaking the seventh commandment with a Frenchman. The thing was absurd. Had he been another Sultan, indeed—well—but she resolved to make the little rascal Gaul pay soundly even for entertaining the wild conceit. What! a Frenchman dare to lift his eyes to her? Ridiculous. The Sultan himself had deigned—but I pass on.

She wrote Ruremonde letters that drove him mad. Here was a lovely woman dying for him—only she couldn't get away. She sent him notes that almost set fire to the paper; they certainly burned up the small remnant of brains which Ruremonde possessed, and lo! he was utterly lost and frenzied. Oh how she loved him! How she adored, idolised, worshipped his dear image! But alas! flight was impossible—flight with him, her soul's darling, the treasure of her eyes, the Adonis among mankind, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. Ruremonde was distracted. What was to be done? Should he shoot Montagu? He meditated it a long time. The

fate of Count Konigsmark's friends, who had sometime before performed that kind office for Tom Thynne (Tom o' ten thousand), butchering him like a pig in Pall Mall, rather deterred our valorous friend. Yet I think he would have risked it, had he been quite certain of my lady ; but as he was not, why he trusted to the chapter of accidents. Meanwhile Lady Mary was all sympathy, all soul, all anxiety about Ruremonde. He occupied her thoughts night and day—he was her dream, her passion, &c. How could she serve him ? Oh, lucky thought ! There was Mister Craggs—her right honourable acquaintance and associate. She would invest his money,—she would make it double, treble, quadruple—nay, she would make it reproduce itself twentyfold. Was not Craggs Secretary of State, and did he not know what was what, and did he not make the fortune of Johnny Gay and fifty others who confided in him. Why should he not do the same for Lady Mary's dearest and most trusted friend ? Aye, indeed, why should he not ?

And the Frenchman absolutely gave my

mother five thousand pounds, and it was all lost, gone, swallowed up—no one ever knew what became of it—gone, though Craggs had advised and counselled, and revealed secrets which by oath he ought not to have revealed. So Ruremonde raved like a madman, there were frightful scenes and frightful letters, and he threatened to show her sweet billets to her husband, and she threatened to have his throat cut by the right honourable Lord Stair, and there was nothing but fire and wrath, and fury, and revenge between this amiable pair. How it was settled in the end I know not. My father, it was supposed, never bothered his head about it. I believe my lady disgorged two thousand pounds, but the other three were lost irretrievably. Ruremonde, I fancy, went mad. At all events, he was never afterwards heard of. I think it cured him of conceit. One can't make love to a duke's daughter without paying the piper handsomely for such a privilege. The few who were in the secret laughed at him for a dupe, but my lady dreaded to the last moment of her existence that he would some day turn up and tell all to her

husband. What if he had? Was it not that worthy gentleman's own fault? Was it not the legitimate end of all his screwing, scraping, saving, and pinching? I suppose he must have heard something of it, but he was discreetly silent if he had. What was it to him? His wife had got three thousand pounds clear profit out of this transaction, and only lost what she did not value, nor he regard. Pope also, who was now one of our dearest friends, heard some tittle tattle about it; but he was too well bred to mention a syllable of the matter to the profane vulgar at large. It was only in after years he alluded to it in the line—“Who starves a sister and denies a debt.” Everyone then knew who he meant, and everybody laughed and sneered when my lady's back was turned, but when she was present face to face, they all shook hands with her, and smiled, and simpered, and flattered, as if she were the sweetest vestal since the days of Rhea Sylvia. O! England! England! thou art the land of honesty, and truth, and frankness; yet have I seen more humbug, falsehood, and hypocrisy practised in one day within thy

golden isle, than in a month in France, Spain, or Italy, or even in the subtle Orient itself. But perhaps I ought not to avow this. It looks unpatriotic. I know that it will be called a rascally lie. Well, so be it.

## CHAPTER V.

“ I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head. \* \* But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown.’

FROM all these pleasing incidents. it may be seen that my life was horribly wretched. Oh ! how I longed for sympathy—for one bright beam of love, for one sweet, fond smile under whose soft and genial influence my heart might bud in flowers. But no smile, though I looked for it morning, noon, and night. I had a vague remembrance of some caresses which my mother gave me while I was yet in petticoats. I could vividly recollect those bright eyes beautified with

the maternal gleam of warm affection, which, more than any other type on earth, gives unto the soul the strongest image of the love of God for all His creatures. Her long and silken hair fell over my cheeks and brow, as she kissed and pressed me to her breast; her face assumed the likeness of an angel; her smile dwelt still within my soul, like a faint dream of Paradise. But all this was gone, and gone, I feared, never to return. As I grew up, her demonstrations of love became fainter, and even still more faint, until at last they disappeared for ever. How I have lingered near her, hoping for some gentle word; how I have looked into her eyes and yearned for one sweet sunbeam of returning fondness; how I have sought by every boyish art to win her back once more to olden days when that long and dearly cherished kiss was given, and all the mother sparkled in her look; how I have listened at her bedroom door to hear those tones that even still were melody to my ear, dreaming that they may haply breathe of me; how I have lain awake at night, and wept, and sighed, and thought how intensely I could love her if she only

cared for me in the least—all these things, God and my own breaking heart knew. The books I thought she loved most, these I sought to master, and was proud and happy when she found me poring over them ; the flowers she regarded best I tended with all the skill that I owned, so that they were ever free from dust or weeds or insects ; and when she walked forth every bright parterre was faultless to the eye. But no rewarding smile or word or token of approval did I get. To Congreve she was all brightness, life and spirit ; her silvery laugh sounded like divinest melody ; but when I stood before her, scarcely daring to look into those eyes for that sacred love after which I pined, she was cold, severe, and silent . When Pope was near, when Wharton was by her side, gazing at her with his large and earnest eyes, how beautiful she appeared ; all her genius shone out of her spirit face ; her features glowed with animation ; her tongue spake in softest accents, and she seemed a something more than earthly. But when the visitor departed, a magic change came over her —she froze, as it were, into marble ; she grew cold, still, selfish, unfeeling ,

capricious, and exacting. One reads in old romances of a beautiful damsel discovered in a forest by some brave, errant knight; she weeps, she prays, she smiles, she fascinates. The gallant adventurer vows to devote his life to her service; she leads him to her bower, or to some faërie castle. Something in her appearance suddenly awakens suspicion, and the noble knight clutches his good sword Excalibar within his mailed hand, and mayhap as an additional precaution lifts up a prayer to God and the Virgin. Scarcely has he done it, when a transformation is seen—a mighty transformation indeed; and the virgin disappears, and he sees only a venomous serpent looking at him with deadly eyes, as Lucifer looked on Eve, and hissing forth cold poison. Such was the difference between my mother before her visitors, and my mother with her son.

Ah me, my friend, there are many, many of these snake-women on the earth, and when I see them I know them as if by instinct; my blood congeals into stone, and I get away as quick as I can, for they awaken gloomy reminiscences, and I feel as if in the presence of something exceed-

ingly deadly, slimy, and repellent. The depth of ice within their hearts can no man fathom: the force of energy in carrying out their cold purposes even unto death, can no man exaggerate.

You may note them by the firm compressed lip when the face is in repose, and the icicle-light that glazes over their eyes as if with a transparent gauze, and the smile that never blushes out of the heart, or returns again into that impassioned fount, but is born of the external skin, plays over it, and retires back into it, when its mechanical work is done. All these women are poisoners in their hearts. I believe that great numbers of them in reality kill their husbands, or all who stand in their way—but they can smile over them even while they murder. The falsehood of men I care not for. I am prepared for it, and I can baffle it; if I fail it is my own fault. But the falsehood and selfishness and want of feeling in women seems so utterly, so outrageously monstrous and unnatural that when I find and experience them, I feel like one who has trodden unawares on some pestiferous serpent whose very breath is ruin. I start back aghast

and in despair. My limbs quiver ; my face grows pallid ; my hairs stand erect. I am horror-stricken and frightened in my very inmost being. For woman was given to man to soothe, to soften, to refine, to humanise into angelic beauty ; and when she perverts this holy purpose how very dreadful must her spirit appear before her Lord and Maker.

I was not at this period able to fathom the secret of this scornful indifference, but I think I can now do so. In the first place all love between Lady Mary and her husband had long since disappeared ; with her love for him, or whatever the feeling originally was, vanished also her love of his son. In the second place she was immersed in so many plots, pursuits, and occupations that she really had no time to give the softer feelings of her heart the least chance of vitality. She was a leader in that heartless game called “fashionable life,” and this absorbs a great quantity of a woman’s time : she studied very hard and spent a great portion of every day among her books and papers ; by no other means I suppose can a lady obtain and keep the renown of being

“ That dangerous thing a female wit.”

She was also perpetually devising new schemes and devices to get money and to keep it when got; for my father's wretched avarice was so all-absorbing that I verily believe if he could have fed us on bran and littered us on straw he would have been but too glad to do it: and as he was perpetually railing at her extravagance she was absolutely forced into a life of meanness, shifts, falsehoods, equivocations, and dirty petty savings in order to preserve the household circle from being a perfect hell upon earth. Finally, she was so fond of admiration that she was perpetually employed in inventing new limes to captivate the wealthy or the witty; from the first of whom she won their money at the bassette table, and from the second their applause in the journals or in song; so that she had really no leisure to be good or kind or loving; and when a woman's or a man's mind has all these various vanities and employments daily and hourly pressing on it, probably you will not be surprised to hear that the result is, little feeling for any one except themselves.

If I dread one thing more than another in pen-

ning these papers, it is that I may appear unnatural in my delineation of the parents of my being. But after a long and painful meditation I must hazard this charge unless I deliberately violate the truth. Nothing of course could be more easy than for me to avoid all reference to these miserable transactions ; to smother them up for ever in night, and to plunge into the details of my own life without any lengthened reference to either Lady Mary or her husband. By doing this I should avoid great censure and spare my own heart. But would it be honest, just, and fair ? Would it even be right to myself whose character has been moulded, whose career to a great extent has been fashioned by the training which I had at home, by the examples which I there beheld, by the life which I saw there prevail ? I am persuaded that it would not, and that even were there no higher motive, self-defence would require from me this anatomy. But there is a higher motive. Can I for one moment suppose that Lady Mary and her husband were the only parents who ever behaved so to their only son ? It is impossible. On the con-

trary, have I not the best reason for believing that there are hundreds and hundreds of similar fathers and mothers who look upon their children as nuisances and enemies ; and freeze out of them in their earliest youth every flowing sentiment of beauty and of love, which holy Nature implanted in their souls. Yea by Alla, they are to be counted in thousands, and to such we may attribute in a great measure the sad discordance which prevails in all things ; the exaggerated foibles and vices and absurdities for which our young men are noted, and the general tone of affectation, selfishness, and infidelity which pervades every order of society. Therefore do I write these things that parents and guardians may see with their own eyes a vivid picture of themselves ; and may be startled by those incidents in the career of others which they themselves daily repeat, but on which their self-love has never let them cast an investigating glance.

When, therefore, O friend and reader, thou censurest me for my misanthropy, bear in mind that all my finest feelings were frozen at their source while I was yet a child ; when thou

arraignest me for waywardness and wilfulness, remember that from the first I never had a guiding hand, or a loving eye to restrain me in the least; when thou cavillest at my life misused, my talents thrown away, my virtues perverted into vices, my passions let loose in tempests on myself and others, pause and ask thyself what right have I to blame this man? How know I what I also may not have grown to be, had I been nurtured like him? From the first he was an outcast from the heart and centre of home; he was thrown among servants; he was exiled from all affection, from all fond solicitude, from all the melodious influences of sympathy and feeling. The most vagabond order of existence seemed to him, and was preferable to his own home. Within his father's threshold virtue never passed, nor meek-eyed charity, nor soft forgiveness; but everything he witnessed was hard, cold, severe, and despicable. The guests whom he saw assembled were selfish scoundrels or silly coxcombs; they who should have been purified by learning, or genius, or great and shining talent were merely intellect without God. His

father was a hardened miser, whose whole soul was in his gold and in his guineas ; his mother was a vain woman of fashion, who thought wit, gallantry, and scandal the three sister graces of the earth ; his only sister was a mere idiot, who never soared a thought above the existence of a grub ; his tutors were harsh, unfeeling wretches, who tortured him body and soul ; he never heard a noble and generous sentiment, but, on the contrary, was surrounded by a motley crew, who laughed at all religion and virtue, and whose sole object was to get on in the world, no matter by what means, or by what resources.

Let me cite for example, one of these fellows. Congreve, the co-labourer with Pope in that honourable attempt on my mother, which was followed up with so much pertinacity, and ended with so much wretchedness. Congreve was what many would call a handsome man, but he never seemed to be so in my eyes. There was an insufferable pride in every puppy feature ; not the pride of nobleness, or honour, or self-conscious dignity, but a low, foppish, arrogant pride, founded on his figure, his eyes, his fine dress, his

reputation as a wit, his official place, his luxurious bachelorhood, and the applause of some score of silly women of high rank, who were half crazy after “darling Will.” To see him strut about the theatre was itself a sight; it reminded one of the peacock, the basest of birds, except for its plumage. To hear him lisp finely, and see him look at you with a supercilious scornful air, as if you were unworthy to be his slave, and note in every word, and look, and gesture, that himself alone was the object of his incessant admiration, was one of the most trying ordeals to which one’s temper could be put. He would lounge into a drawing-room, gorgeously dressed, and before a dozen women who ought to be virtuous, and who certainly were in the peerage books, exclaim—

“ Oh ! demme, I don’t know what I shall do for all you women. You won’t give a man a moment’s peace. Like Orpheus, I shall be torn into five hundred pieces. There are fifty contending for me at the same moment. By Gad ! I shall retire into a forest, or into an uninhabited island. I once thought the Rape of the Sabines

was a true event; but by Gad I now think that it was the ladies themselves who ran away with the Roman vagabonds."

And after this abominable scene, he would retire and repeat it somewhere else; the ladies—dear creatures—being enraptured with such high breeding and such choice wit.

Congreve was "the fashion," and could do almost anything. That he was an abandoned and dissolute rake was a matter of course. To be so was one of the main accomplishments of a fine gentleman of the period; and the women could not endure a man who lay under the horrid suspicion of being virtuous. He had the run of the green rooms, and what they were, and are, and always will be, every man about them knows, and everybody not about them may guess. He raked until he got blind; now with Mrs. Brace-girdle, now with Nan Jallett, now with Madame Berenger, now with Madame Marlborough. His middle age was cursed by the memorials of his excesses. Never shall I forget a scene which once took place at Hampton Court Palace, when I was but a child. It was a beautiful day in

August, and Lady Mary took it into her head to conduct me through the gardens. We sauntered about for some time. Congreve joined us, and was elaborate in his politeness. He made use of all his wit to charm, and finally prevailed on Lady Mary to leave me near one of the fountains and walk with him alone. My heart still burns with the rage I felt when I saw them disappear. Instinct told me, poor boy—I was not more than eight years old, I think—that he meditated no good to my mother, but I knew nothing farther. Every fibre was alive and hot with fury. I ran in the direction which they had taken, but I could not find them. I called aloud. Echo repeated my words, and yet again I called, “Mamma! mamma!” In a few minutes, Lady Mary appeared; she seemed in haste; her hair was in a slight disorder, and she hurried towards me. After her followed Congreve, with a quick step, and he seemed apologising, beseeching, deprecating. She hurried on without taking any notice of him, and when she came up to me I was amazed to find her kiss me; her face was flushed; she seemed agitated and feverish. Again I

knew that something wrong was meditated, and I looked at Congreve with fury in my looks. He saw it, and gave me a bunch of roses which he had gathered, and had already vainly offered to Lady Mary. I took them and flung them in his face; he affected to smile, but there was rage and the venom of a devil in his false smile.

He spoke to her in French, a language which I knew not. I scanned him closely, and endeavoured to penetrate into his meaning with my eyes. His language was supplicating; his demeanour obsequious in the extreme; he seemed entreating pardon for some involuntary offence. He spoke earnestly; she affected for a period not to listen; but the poison gradually stole into her ears and won her heart. She even answered him, a thing which she had first positively refused to do. I could see a smile of villainous triumph in his eyes. Again he led her away under an avenue of trees, and I was left alone. They had not been out of sight many moments, when I felt as if enveloped in horror; my heart again swelled with rage; lava fire

seemed to thrill through me. I was under an unknown fever. I was under the influence of a mighty magnetic spell. A consciousness of evil again smote me, as if with the wing of a whirlwind, and I burst into a torrent of tears. How terribly is all this graven on my memory ; now, after the lapse of more than half a century. My sobs, my loud cries were again re-echoed, and Lady Mary returned as before ; but now she was filled with anger. Congreve again followed, and I could see his face pale with rage, or disappointment, or repulse. Lady Mary addressed me harshly, but I clung to her robe, and kept a firm hold of her. I entwined myself among the folds of her dress ; she sought to loose me, but I would not let her go. Congreve used entreaties, threats, endearments, and finally, even force, but I kicked at him with all my strength, and the beau's silk stockings bore vestiges of my toes. At length a sudden cloud burst overhead, thunder pealed, and lightning flashed, and rain fell in torrents, and Lady Mary and myself returned home, without Con-

greve, whose escort she positively declined, and who took his leave evidently chagrined, if not enraged at something that had crossed him.

This incident is slight, but I never can forget it. I have lived it over again, while I penned the last few pages ; every line and feature of it was reproduced before my mind's eye. I can remember even the dripping of the rain on a certain stone which Congreve put aside with his gold-headed cane. I can remember the green leaves of a laurel tree on which the drops flashed, and from which they rebounded against my face. I can remember the momentary shelter which we took beneath a clump of trees, and my own feeling of delight that the storm had come on, and my ardent hope that the next lightning flash would strike my enemy dead at my feet. When he came near me I went to the opposite side ; when he edged round again and sought to speak to me, I retreated from his odious presence, and got back to my old place. Why was he thus courting me at this moment ?—he who had never before condescended even to look upon me ? My heart asked itself this question ; and though I can

now guess his motive, I was then only a child, and could not fathom it in the least. He offered me some apples, but I flung them into the road ; he presented me with cakes, but I trampled them beneath my feet. At length the temper of the man prevailed, and I think he would have broken out with something savage, but my mother or her presence restrained him. I saw him many times again, at our own house and at the houses of others ; but I always hated him from that day. I could not endure his presence ; I looked at him with loathing, and fled from him with aversion, until at length we grew open foes, nor did either mask his hate from the other. When I heard he was dead I regretted it only for one reason, and that was that I had not driven a sword into his heart. The grim envoy seemed to me to have cheated me of that which belonged to me of right.

## CHAPTER VI.

**"A generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness."**

THOUGH the Rt. Hon. Edward Wortley Montagu grudged every penny that he expended, and parted with a guinea more sorrowfully than if it were his heart's blood, yet was he nevertheless obliged by the abominable laws and customs of society to throw his doors open occasionally for the reception of the most brilliant members of rank and fashion, whom he entertained accordingly, and whom he hated like fiends as they devoured his costly dainties and guzzled his expensive wines. But he could not help himself. He and his lady wife were asked to various par-

ties, dinners, balls, suppers, breakfasts, and masquerades. To refuse the hospitable givers of these splendid entertainments would have been to make them bitter foes ; to accept their invitations entailed the dire necessity of a return in kind. Had Mr. Montagu manfully resolved to live like a hermit and do nothing but reside in a wood and accumulate money, all this dreadful folly would have been avoided. But unhappily for himself he could not well do this. He was a member of parliament, and he did not like to give it up ; he was a member of the high fashionable world of wits, and fops, and fine gentlemen, and he could not separate himself from such exalted intercourse without such a struggle as he scarcely cared to endure ; he was an aspirant for ministerial dignity, and it was only Cincinnatus who was taken from the plough. Nobody ever heard of any hermit in England being put into the cabinet, nor would he be so, though he possessed all the virtues of Jesus Christ, all the knowledge of Pythagoras, all the patriotism of Brutus, and all the statesmanship of Solon and Lycurgus. There-

fore it was that my honoured father still lived in Cavendish Square, still accepted invitations from lords and ladies, and still was forced in compliance with cruel custom to give these lords and ladies what lawyers call a *quid pro quo*.

Oh! what scenes these were! Horace it is, I think, or some other of those Roman voluptuaries, who speaks of certain debauches with ladies in loose purple robes and golden clasps—that were unclasped—and rosy garlands, and silver goblets, and soft couches, and I know not what else—perhaps it is well I do not know—and he irreverently calls them *noctes cænæque deûm*—nights and suppers of the gods. But these nights I suppose of my father were *noctes cænæque diabolorum*, for not only were all the noble and right honourable company fairly entitled to that name, but Mr. Montagu himself endured such an agony of hell during the whole entertainment that it might fairly be said that he was in Tartarus itself, and enduring all the torment of that fabled, fabulous, or storied region, which ever name the truly Christian reader wishes to give it.

Every fresh bottle that was uncorked was a poisoned adder biting his soul ; every fresh pie or pastry that was broken into by fair and delicate hands plunged him into Hades ; every fragrant pine that was sliced was a cup of venom which he was obliged to gulp down with many a hidden grimace. With what a hearty and sincere hatred he detested these odious harpies ; how he wished that every bit and sup might choke them as they sat ; how he cursed and swore at himself, as a fool for yielding to the prevailing fanaticism of society, and blindly following in the wake of an absurd fashion. This he did while the Saturnalia were going on. But next morning he was serene again. He was now free for another three months. The thing was over and done with. His mind was at ease. He had performed his duty, and no Englishman is expected to do more. The bills—well they *must* be paid, and they were paid with many a pang, and blasphemy, and deduction ; and all went on as usual until the next necessity of the same kind again plunged him into Hell.

Let me sketch one of these charming enter-

tainments. I was at one, and only one. All the great people of London were summoned; all the fine women, all the battered rakes, dukes, marquisses, earls, viscounts, barons, with pedigrees—oh! how long, and bodies—oh! how diseased, and consciences—oh! how black with every kind of sin. Did we descend to the vulgar tribe of baronets? Well, I believe there were a few, but we asked them simply because we could not help it; Walpole was there, but he was invited not as baronet, but as prime minister. My father, indeed, despised the whole crawling crew of little barons, and as a general rule they are a contemptible body of ragamuffins. However, there were some asked, and of course they came. You will always find a baronet where there is a prime minister. Half the peerage thronged our rooms; the other half that was in patriotic opposition was not asked. The Duke of Wharton came drunk; Lord Berkeley, for a miracle, came sober. Lord and Lady Pomfret descended like a radiant vision of diamonds of the rarest price. Lady Sundon hid her cancer by a fine shawl around her throat. Lords and Ladies A, B, C, D, E, F,

G, H, I, K, L, M, and N, appeared in various costumes of red, white, black, blue, grey, brown, orange, scarlet, azure, pink, green, and crimson, set off with pearls, rubies, sapphires, amethysts, opals, emeralds, and gold and silver. Lords and Ladies O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, flashed and fluttered in silk, satin, velvet, and cloth of gold ; they appeared in all the colours of the rainbow, and a great many more that the rainbow never had ; their periwigs breathed the sweetest essences of perfumed powder. Talk of Araby the Blest or Sabæan odours—pooh ! pooh ! Their necklaces, buttons, girdles, earrings, rings, stomachers, and coronets glittered with all the jewels of the East, and their faces shone with all the pigments and figments of the western world. Nothing could be, indeed, more delightful than the whole assembly ; though I should be very sorry to see and smell the great majority of them just now, rotting in their coffins and half eaten up by worms. I mean, of course, such of them as did not die in the odour of sanctity, and were not embalmed in spice and frankincense, as all noble and right honourable persons ought to be ;

for these earth vermin are odious to think of by all who have aristocratic tastes or habits. For my own part I hope to be burned on a pyre like a phœnix, and so give the elements the benefit of my remains—stap my vitals !

There they were, and oh ! how brilliant ! Talk of Paradise, prate of Elysium, brag of Valhalla, expatriate on Vaikoontha, the Hesperides, Hybrazil, the Golden Islands, the heaven of Indra, the gardens of Shedad or Mohammed—the whole thing would be absurd. Never was there seen a more grand and gorgeous assembly. Lord Somers, the chancellor, left the lady with whom he was living in open defiance of the seventh commandment and came ; is it not Horry Walpole who calls him “one of those divine men who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned while all the rest is tyranny, corruption, and folly.” Well, this “divine man” was there, and the place was redolent of his purity and divinity. His great curly wig flowed over his heavy sensual face and great gloating eyes, and gave one anything but an idea of divineness. But hath not Horry said it, and did not the king and parliament and

twenty writers of that lie called history, proclaim it in highways and byeways, and who shall breathe dissent? I only wonder he did not bring his nasty old witch with him. He might have done so [for anything that either his host or hostess cared. Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, was there; they called him "Dismal," and a dismal old frog he was. Being too old for politics he was making a sacrifice to God of the devil's leavings, and had taken to theology. It was a rare comedy to hear Phil Wharton make a burlesque of his letters to Waterland on the Trinity, or his epistles to Whiston about the Holy Ghost. The Earl of Suffolk was there, but he I think was deranged, as most of the Howards are; but he did not bring his mad work called "Musarum Deliciæ, ideas supposed to be written two thousand years ago by an Asiatic Poet," though I am glad to say he quoted largely from it to all whom he accosted, and thereby added greatly to the hilarity of the evening. In fact this noble bard realised to the full his own frenzied description of a beau, and I think I heard that profane wag Wharton pointing him

out to half-a-dozen women, and citing his own grotesque verses descriptive of that wondrous creature called a fop. They ran something in this way, and I print them that they may be preserved, for I fear none of his lordship's works will ever reach "Prince Posterity."

Adorned with silks and a huge flaunting wig,  
He proudly tramps and looks most vastly big,  
Struts like an actor on the Gallic stage  
And boasts himself example of the age,  
Though by his leave there should a difference be  
Betwixt rude fops and these of high degree.  
A lord in rich embroidery may shine  
Which for a ninny would be much too fine.  
Yet let the saucy fop gold laces wear  
On him they will but tinsel-like appear.  
And as the learned Erasmus says, an ape  
An ape will be, though tissue clothe his shape,  
So Hewett for the beau may garments frame,  
The value of his mind is still the same.

Lord Macclesfield came up especially from Staffordshire and figured among the party. He had been found guilty of the grossest corruption, fined £30,000 and his name erased, by the King himself, from the list of Privy Councillors ; but what was that ? It had been popularly said at his trial before the House of Lords that the County of Stafford had produced the three greatest rogues and scoundrels of the age, Jack Sheppard,

Jonathan Wilde and Lord Macclesfield ; but what was that ? A flea bite, nothing more. Did it exclude him from fashionable society ? Oh ! dear no. There he was, with plenty of money, a peerage, and I don't know what ; certainly with plenty of people ready and willing to flatter him as another Cato of Utica, a Socrates wrongfully accused by Anytus, an Aristides who was ostracised only because he was so just. Lord Chief Justice Raymond, who was ready to hang any man at the bidding of Walpole or the Bishops, was there also, and a brave and noble magistrate he was. Anyone who looked into his eyes could see that they were intense with rougery, sneaking, meanness, and servility ; but what of that ? He was Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and so, good reader if that thou canst read, I have no doubt the wise public thought he was infallible and he himself believed he was an archangel. But the curse of God fell upon him, as it usually does upon gentlemen of his order, and after accumulating wealth all his life by the basest means, and gaining his title by the most degrading arts, he left both to his son,

who dying without issue, the peerage became extinct, and what remained of the money went to the dogs, amid a loud amen from Tartarus of Hades.

There was Lord King, the son of a salter in Exeter, who even then exhibited marks of the paralysis under which he subsequently died, and who bored everybody with his absurd divinity notions, which were as shallow as a rain puddle, and not a bit more agreeable ; but he eat and drank on them, as if he thought he could cheat the devil after a life of chicanery, by a finale of fanaticism ;—and there was George Granville, Lord Lansdowne, who ran into the opposite extreme and was said to have written a poem on the crucifixion, in Hudibrastic verses, in which the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were pleasantly travestied *a la Scarron*. This noble lord took especial delight in hunting poor King and Dismal about like their shadows, and disgorging within their hearing some of the gay licentious airy blasphemies which were so fashionable a sport in the gallant era of Charles Stuart, the second of that name, King of Eng-

land, France, and Ireland, and strenuous Defender of the Christian Faith. There was the Earl of Peterborough, who made you think of a comet, or a firework, or a quill stuck full of mercury, so wild, erratic and eccentric were all his proceedings, and I remember well that one of his jests on this occasion was pinning the wig of His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury to the wig of that right reverend Father in God, the Lord Bishop of London, as these two holy men sat discussing the question of a pension on the Irish establishment, for one of the King's cast-off mistresses ; and when they rose and moved in opposite directions great was their dismay at finding that they unwigged each other.

There was Charles Howard, Earl of Carlisle, Governor and Captain of Windsor Castle, with the cock-up nose and maudlin eye of all that breed ; and Kitty Sedley, Duchess of Buckinghamshire, who fancied herself the offshoot of King James the Second, until her mother taught her better, and informed her that she was the unlawful offspring of a player at the theatre, who supplanted his most sacred majesty with the frail daughter of

Sir Charles. There was Tom Paget, who was certainly insane, and Jack Hervey, whom Pope immortalised as Fanny, Sporus, and I know not what else. He wore his gold key as Vice-Chamberlain to her Majesty, and talked smut to all the ladies of rank, so that I think the old Duchess of Marlborough was not far from the mark when she called him “the most wretched profligate man that ever was born, besides ridiculous, a painted face, and not a tooth in his head”—or a truth in his heart, she might have added. There was the Earl of Gainsborough, who had just won a large wager by riding naked on a cow through a village, to the great edification of his tenantry and acquaintances, but not at all to his damage in high born society, or with the fair, fine women of the fashion ; and there was Frances Thynne, Duchess of Somerset, a short-nosed, swarthy, ugly woman, who thought herself a poetess, and delighted to be drawn with a basket of flowers, a shepherdess’ crook, a crescent like Diana, or anything else absurd, extravagant, and as she supposed, romantic and ideal. There was the Duke of Newcastle, better known as Tom Empty, and the Earl

of Northington, who spoke the language of a costermonger; and would no more use a decent word when he could find an indecent one to express his thoughts, than he would have gone to prayers on Sunday, or abstained from any of his usual vices at the request of a parson who wanted a living, and so desired to appear sanctimonious. There was the Duke of St. Albans, one of the weakest of men, and the Duke of Manchester, one of the meanest. That blundering blockhead Lord Falmouth; Lord Pembroke, who could scarcely write his own name, and could certainly not read anybody else's; and Lady Archibald Hamilton, who had an unmentionable place about the palace, and filled Carlton House with so many Scotch cousins that whenever Lord Chesterfield met any one there whom he did not know, he bowed and said, “your humble servant, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton.” But is it necessary to give a catalogue of these noble and illustrious persons? I think not. I leave it to the man who makes up the fashionable column for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, so called in irony, because I believe no gentleman yet ever had anything to do with it.

The conversation of these high bred and accomplished persons of quality had all the wit, humour, and variety, which might be expected from their antecedents. The politicians in place got together, and devised traps for the opposition out of place; the bishops consulted about their next fat dinner and jollification in mulled claret; the lawyers considered what truckling course was most likely to advance them a step in the peerage, or get sinecures for their sons, or commissions in the army or navy for their daughters. The simple noblemen conferred about getting their wives pensioned on the Irish establishment, which was then the general receptacle of all the infamous who were poor, but had blood.

“By my life,” quoth Lord A—— to the Earl of B——, “your lordship is looking young again. You seem to have renewed your youth like the eagles, and no one rejoices more than I do at the manifest improvement in your health.”

“I am honoured,” replied the Earl, “by your lordship’s good wishes, and I certainly am glad to say that I have not felt better for the last twenty years. I am pleased also that I can re-

turn the compliment, for your lordship never looked more vigorous."

Now the real thought in Lord A.'s heart was this, though he did not choose to express it, but I could see it, for I read it in his eyes—

"Here is that loathsome old voluptuary B. He has just gone through a course of mercury, and is looking out for fresh diseases. How absurdly the fellow is dressed up. He apes the fashion of youth, and no doubt fancies that in those pale looks, emaciated limbs, and blear-eyes, he exhibits all the graces of an Adonis, and is equally irresistible with the women, while he is in fact uglier than Silenus himself. I must tell the old booby I am glad, for his wines are excellent, and his cook one of the best.

And the real answer that Earl B. ought to have made was this, for no man knew the value and sincerity of Lord A.'s friendship better than he did.

"This sneaking sponge is scheming for an invitation to one of my little suppers, and I suppose I must ask him, though he has grown so silly and decrepid of late that I half fancy he

will go off in a fit at one. Faith, I hope he may ; it would be a funny sight to see him kick his last. He makes me think of the skeleton at the Egyptian feast, and if he changes into one at our next meeting I shall laugh heartily."

" Ah ! my dear Tom," says Lord C. to the Marquis of D., " how delighted I am to see you. What news ?—what news ? How is the little Laura ?"

" Faith !" says the Marquis, " she was never better. She, and I, and Jack Bellamy, and Fanny Flirtaway had a glorious night of it last Wednesday. We all got drunk as owls. You should have seen how Jack tossed and tumbled like a posture master, till I thought the women would have fallen into fits. For my own part I laughed myself into convulsions."

" And what became of the harlequin ?"

" Why after going through ten thousand evolutions, the last more absurd than the one preceding it, the wine got so completely the upper hand of him that he tumbled dead drunk under the table ; we emptied all the heel taps over him, and having baptised the fellow in choice Bur-

gundy, left him there, and the two ladies rode home in my chariot. Oh ! how Fanny laughed at the thought of his next morning's jealousy!"

"Exquisite—exquisite. The spectacle must have been one for gods. And how goes the affair with the Fornarina?"

"Why the unconscionable little Papist asks five thousand pounds down, an annuity for her parents, a present to the father confessor, and a commission in the Guards for her youngest brother."

"Oh ! outrageous ! Was ever heard of such insolence ?"

"Certainly not, and that is the chief reason why I like her so well. I have consented to all her terms except the last."

"But if she persists on that point?"

"Pooh—pooh ! she can't persist. I have got the father confessor on my side by doubling the gratuity which the lady asked, and by his assistance I have no doubt all will be managed. By-the-bye, have you seen that ugly rat Rutland here to-night ? If there is any man I hate it is that fellow."

“ I have not seen him. I suppose he is your rival with the Fornarina ?”

“ Why, yes—yes ; the ungainly coxcomb is vain enough to aspire to her ; but she laughs at him in the drollest way, and throws me almost into hysterics by her mimicry of his absurd grimaces. Only fancy, the fellow vows that he will leave his lawful wife and go abroad with the Fornarina, offering her a cottage and himself by the Lake of Como. She is willing enough to take the first, but the last is worse than a bolus, and so Rutland is in despair.”

“ And what does his wife say ?”

“ Why, like a sensible woman, she consoles herself with Lord Strut, and lets her liege lord blazon his folly as widely as he likes.”

Here the object of this amicable conference, Rutland himself, suddenly appeared—a tall, ugly, thin man, resplendent with the blue ribbon of the most noble order of the garter. As he approached our witty acquaintances the faces of both brightened with the most loving expression of refined friendship, and the honourable marquis, who had just called him “ a rat,” and so

cordially avowed his hatred, ran up to him, and shaking him by the hand cried out —

“ My dear duke, I am enchanted to see you here. How is the charming duchess ? I cannot tell you how disappointed I was at not meeting you t’other day at court.”

## CHAPTER VII.

“Now the Serpent was more subtle than any beast of the fields which the Lord God had made . . . and the Serpent said unto the Woman—”

BUT I grow tired of this high life. True, it was the Elysian Garden of Lady Mary, as it is of all such people. Her husband used her as he used his parties, simply to advance his own interests ; but what became of either her body or soul did not enter much into his greedy thoughts. He knew well the kind of people with whom he was living ; she knew them also, but she went into this den of serpents without the slightest heed or care as to what she was doing ; and he let her do so without the least compunction in his heart

whether she conquered or was crushed in the detestable battle that was waged between good and evil. They met perhaps once a quarter. As a general rule my father lived wholly in town, and my lady was banished to Twickenham to do as she liked ; but when the era of balls, dinners, and parties was on, she was then brought to Cavendish Square, to preside over his table, and play the amiable hostess ; after which she was again scornfully dismissed to the banks of the Thames ; living there on a stated allowance ; saving out of her sister's annuity ; and doing the duty of an obedient drudge ; for resistance or rebellion against Mr. Montagu never once seems to have entered into her thoughts. Not that she wanted the will. No, by the gods ! that woman had a will worthy of a Russian empress ; but she dared not. He held her by some invisible iron chain. He was the master of her soul, the despot of her destiny ; and though she absolutely loathed him, she trembled at his very name. He himself vegetated in London on fifty or sixty pounds a year, and never wrote to her, or seemed even to think that such a person existed, except

when quarter day came, and then he was painfully reminded of her vitality. I often wonder whether he hated or despised her most; but I think the latter was his predominant feeling.

Figure to yourself, O ! dear reader, this clever, handsome, passionate woman, whom all other mortals of the male sex courted, and all other goddesses of the female sex envied, thus flung carelessly upon the world; and if you can fancy the boiling pit of Tartarus, with ten million conflicting damned souls, you can then form some idea of the seething cauldron of her heart. I don't say it was right in my father to treat his wife so, but he had his own reasons, and he was no fool. I have no doubt he acted on the firmest conviction that he was behaving properly; and he was one of those snake-blooded people who do not make up their minds to an energetic course until after a long series of dubitations, but who when they *are* resolved are as inflexible as cold steel.

These meetings were like the clash of two icebergs; they parted without, on his side, even the decency of a farewell; though my lady always kept up appearances, and smiled and shook hands

with apparent fervour, which did not deceive her lord, though I suppose she vainly hoped it would. He never even affected to look her in the face, but shunned her gaze as if it were something odious and repulsive. Yet she complained not. She did not venture even to remonstrate. In my own opinion he would have acted much more mercifully if he had racked or bowstrung her at once, according to approved Eastern fashion ; but our rascally laws prevent this course—and why ? Why, that we may torment our women to death, and make their entire lives a hell upon earth, instead of disposing of them quickly, which is the benevolent Turkish mode. Such favourites are women with the laws of England ; such cruel powers are given to their husbands in that favoured land.

I have described one scene with Congreve, the nature of which the wise may conjecture. We saw little of him after that. He got tired of what appeared to be a vain pursuit, and took up with the mad Duchess of Marlborough, who had her father's hot blood, without one particle of the cool judgment which guided or restrained it. To

her he left his fortune, while his near relations starved in Staffordshire. Let me now paint another, and the last of these meetings, which I mean to describe. It was with Pope, who still persisted in his folly, notwithstanding the repulse of his dear friend. The world has often asked itself the cause of those terrible feuds which afterwards raged so violently between Lady Mary and the moral bard? Many suspected, many invented, none knew. But it shall be no longer ignorant. I was an accidental witness of the thing, and here it is developed and detailed.

Suppose yourself at Twickenham, O! reader of a future century, in the golden autumn of 1724. We inhabit a pretty villa by the river side; the swans are sailing up and down; the silver clouds float lazily over the blue arch; the sun is bright with Eastern splendour; the air is balmy with the breath of flowers. My father is, as usual, in London; he has not seen my mother for I know not how many days, or weeks, or perhaps months, though she has incessantly sought him in Cavendish Square. Pope has written her an enraptured letter, and has promised us the distinguished

honour of a visit. My lady is in her best brocade awaiting him in the garden, and I am playing with some china monsters in a room that overlooks the sparkling river. Suddenly I see a small distorted man, with a lean, haggard, monkey face, blearing eyes, scarcely any hair, a thin, straight nose, and coarse mouth, striding with a long and splay foot up the walk ; his back is bent, his body crooked, his fingers long and like a vulture's claws, his smile satirical, hollow, and sardonic, and his whole appearance that of an obscene bird of ill-omen. He is dressed in a black velvet suit, and leans on a gold headed cane. This is Alexander Pope, the great laureate of the fashionable world, the Horace of the eighteenth century, the ape-Apollo of the fair and frivolous.

My lady went to meet him, and received him with an easy grace. He bowed with all the air of a polished courtier of the highest fashion ; his hat was in his hand, his head bent, and his eyes expressed respect and deference. A faint smile passed over his pale features, and after a brief parley they approached the room where I was

playing. Suddenly, by some mischance, I tumbled over one of my lady's most beloved monsters; the image fell, and the head was knocked off. I almost heard the footsteps at the door. Dreading a scene, such as I had more than once witnessed, and a well boxed pair of ears, such as I had more than once felt, I picked up the broken china, and with a heart beating quickly, took refuge behind a painted screen, which masked one of my lady's favourite corners. Scarcely had I ensconced myself than the door opened, and Lady Mary, accompanied by the cringing, flattering dwarf, whom all England delighted to honour, made her appearance. He had evidently squeezed her hand, or made some other overture, for I could see her face was more suffused than usual. He led her to a sofa, and seated himself beside her. He was silent for a few moments, and then began as follows, in a low and deep voice, which bore, at least, the sound of earnestness. I could see and hear from my nook; the scene impressed itself indelibly on my mind. Even then I began to look with hatred on the sickening little troll with all his rhyming art.

“ Not written, or sent, or visited,” says the gentleman. “ What can possibly detain him? Why is he blind to the brightest sun?”

“ I suppose he is no worse than all your statesmen and politicians,” answered my lady. “ I scarcely ever yet knew one of them that was not an owl. They are so wrapped up in their own little dark plots, that they can see nothing else in the world.”

“ Then it is your ladyship’s opinion that love has taken refuge with poets alone?” said Pope, after a brief pause.

“ I have scarcely any opinion,” answered she, “ about what does not exist.”

“ What,” cries the other, “ do I live to hear the most beautiful woman in England negative the existence of the universal passion?”

“ I have found it an universal fable,” answered she; “ I have heard much of the thing, but have never seen it in actual life. I have read of it; I have been told of it—nay, why should I deny that it has even been professed to myself with many an ardent oath; but I know that they who were most loud in their declarations sought

simply their own amusement, or to indulge their vanity. I could read selfishness in their eyes, and see the hollowness of their false hearts, though they thought I could not."

"Your ladyship should not judge of all mankind," says Pope, "by such specimens of it as you saw at Paris, or Vienna. There are men who truly love, and who would devote the whole of their existence to her whom they adore."

The lying pygmy! How came he to know this? Certainly not from within.

"Are there?" said my lady; "what a pity it is that they are not exhibited. The whole female world would flock to see that wonder of wonders — a faithful lover."

A faint blush passed over the sickly features of the poet. He then resumed. I could see my lady play with him as a cat plays with a mouse.

"I know a man," said he, "who loves, and loves devotedly. The woman he worships is the pride and glory of her sex. She is more beautiful than this splendid scene of stream and wood on

which we now gaze ; she is more bright than the sky lit with sunshine. Her wit is like the diamond ; her manners enchant ; her smile, her thoughts, her words are music. Unfortunately for him, another owns her, who prizes her not at all, and she has never yet given her admirer more than soft words, and, perhaps, at times, a look on which he lives. Yet this man—will you tell me that he does not love ?”

My lady looked at the absurd dwarf. She knew well whom and what he meant, but she remembered that she was a duke’s daughter, and that it was a linen-draper’s son who ventured to talk in this mad way. She had amused herself with his folly, and played with him—poor wriggling trout—until he was fairly hooked, and thought himself secure of the gilded fly. It was a fine thing, a polite thing—and this woman was a subtle deviser—to have Alexander Pope celebrating her in prose and poetry, dangling in her train, and telling the world how beautiful, and great, and wise she was. It was convenient to use him as her flying newsman, to extend her praises, and make her loving friends grow pale

with envy. But this was all my lady ever contemplated from him. Had he been a handsome lord! Well! She never dreamed the poet was so selfish as to demand a *quid pro quo* for all this fine sentiment. She now looked at him with the air of a vestal, as if she had never been in the seraglio ; as if she was unable to comprehend how any man could love a married woman ; as if she had not that very day penned to Lady Pomfret a letter all profligacy, scandal, and impurity ; but her air did not deceive her companion, who was as quick and keen as a weasel, or a ferret, and, indeed, at this moment, he gave me a vivid idea of one or both. For I began to hate him with a child's passion. I could feel my blood boil, and my veins throb. I longed to rush out, and brain him with the broken monster, which, by the way, seemed much handsomer than this enamoured minstrel.

“ How can this wretch,” I thought, “ dare to talk in this way, in my presence ? Am I not her son—her guardian ? ”

I forgot that I was an infant, and unseen.

“And who,” enquired my lady, “may this wonderful man be?”

“You see him before you,” answered the poet, in a low, deep tone, and with an earnest look, that had all the appearance of reality—the devil under an angel’s semblance.

“Lor! bless me,” she answered, “I never should have thought it. I supposed that Swift and Fermor, your grotto and the muses, were all you cared for.”

“Ah!” said he, “you do not know my heart. Would that you did.”

But Lady Mary knew it well. She had seen into the little dirty nook; she had probed its inmost depths. She saw vanity, falsehood, scorn, and selfishness in that deep hollow cavern, which the poet now pretended was all her own. She knew that all he was telling, or had told her, was a lie, gotten by heart, and repeated to half a score of silly, pretty women, by this Devil on two sticks of a bard.

“You talk,” said he, “of Swift, as if there could be any real sympathy between that misan-

thropist and myself. You speak of Fermor, but she thinks only of that impotent Lord Petre, who like all the Catholic nobility is but half a man ; of the muses, but I care not for them ; of my Grotto, but I find no pleasure in it.

“Ah! friend 'tis true, this truth you lovers know,  
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,  
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes,  
Of hanging mountains and of sloping greens,  
Joy lives not here ; to happier seats it flies,  
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.”

The hateful little hatter murmured this in a way irresistibly comical ; I have no doubt he thought it would be pathetic in the extreme ; but Lucretia was not more insensible to the name of Tarquin than Lady Mary was to the raptures of her misshapen admirer. She affected to listen with surprise, and still to wonder who he meant ? The bard took hope. He had ventured thus far, and had not been brained with her ladyship's fan, or given over to the kicks of John Footman.

“Charming Lady Mary,” he cried, “can you, indeed, be ignorant of her who is the bright morning star of my heart and love ; on whom my thoughts and feelings have dwelled for years ; who

came before me like a radiant vision of youth in the dark Hades of London life, and filled me with her presence like a splendour? Oh! how I have loved you, and longed to tell you so—dreamed of you when you were afar off; lived upon your image; panted to behold you once again, and to pour forth the passion of my life, Your portrait by Kneller, which I have hung up opposite to where I always sit, is but a poor substitute for her whom I adore. Give me but your heart, and believe me to be wholly yours.”

And the writhing imp absolutely fell on his knees before her.

But here an event happened, the most unromantic possible. The little man was never vigorous; he was at this time weak in health and feeble about the knees, though he professed love like Hercules himself. As he slipped gracefully to the fair feet of his princess, he fell on the floor and sprawled before her in the most undignified manner. He even rolled. It was as if Nemesis had knocked the lying little baboon on the head in pure spite. This was too much for

Lady Mary. That keen sense of the ludicrous, which no woman ever possessed in greater perfection, was immediately called into play. The contrast between the impassioned poet and the sprawling, rolling mannikin on the carpet, who looked all confusion and mortification, appeared so striking, that she burst into a loud fit of unfeeling laughter, which sounded in Alexander's ear like his death knell. The woman who could thus sport with his deformity he knew at once never could be his. The blood rushed to his very eyes—not red, but black, envenomed, yellow, snakey blood. He raged and writhed like a madman. He sought to scramble to his legs, in some implike fashion, but failed, and his appealing glance to my lady for assistance was answered only by another burst of ringing laughter. The bell sounded, a servant entered, and with ill-concealed mockery—perhaps he had been listening—lifted up the nightingale of Twickenham. No word did he speak—I suppose he could not. He did not bow or look farewell; but hastened out of the room with a fury gnawing his heart. My lady's clear and silvery laughter accompanied

his flight, and goaded him like a poisoned arrow. Never was a love scene ended so ridiculously. As he hobbled down the garden, he could hear her singing—

“Cease, fond shepherd, cease desiring  
What you never can enjoy ;  
She derides your vain aspiring,  
She to all your sex is coy.  
Cunning Damon once pursued her,  
Yet she never would incline ;  
Strephon too as vainly wooed her,  
Though his flocks are more than thine.”

And here her silvery scornful laughter rang again.

Pope turned round; there was a grinning devil in his face.

“Woman!” he cried out, “vile, heartless, deceitful! You shall rue this to the end of time. I will cover your name with ignominy ; I will unmask your profligacy before the world. What ! *you*, the woman of the seraglio, the jest of Wharton, the deceiver of your husband, the plunderer of Ruremonde, the gambler on the Exchange, with every foul conceit abiding in your heart, vicious as a Roman empress, corrupt in every thought that passes through your brain —think you that I did not know you as you are ?

Yea, I did, indeed ; and so shall the world see.''  
And, shaking his fist, he turned round, while  
Lady Mary still laughed ; but her mirth now  
seemed hollow and feigned.

And now all was over between this amiable pair. They never again met as friends, but always as deadly enemies, each bent as if on the ruin of the other. The poet lampooned the lady ; the angry fair one libelled the poet. Pope invented lies and gave them circulation. My mother was equally fertile in calumny and cunning. Both parties were to blame ; he, for labouring as he had, to withdraw a wedded dame from her loyalty ; she for even appearing to encourage his base pursuits. An accident had foiled him, and perhaps preserved her, for the moment, at least, from *him*. The labours of years had vanished in a trice. For anyone who has read his letters to Lady Mary, written while she was abroad, and after her return home, can have but one feeling, and that must be of mingled scorn and disgust for this puling hunchback, who omitted no art of flattery or insinuation to debauch her heart and poison her mind,

and make her an easy prey to his advances. I have read them over and over again, as they have been copied into one of her note-books; and at each perusal my heart was fire. Had I been able at this moment, pitiless for his discomfiture, I could have torn him in pieces. But I was so thunderstruck at the scene that I was speechless. I suppose I made some noise, for all that I recollect next was seeing my mother stand before me, with rage in her eyes, and flame flashing out of every feature. I was covered with confusion. I pointed to the broken monster, but she evidently believed that I had deliberately concealed myself. From that moment till her death she detested me. She did not speak, she did not pause to think, but with one blow felled me to the floor.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

My father’s house was now no more a home for me. I was sent to school, oh ! terrible reminiscence. Now began my days and nights of misery. For the silvery river, the green leasowe, the garden, wood, or bower, I was immersed in a horrid dungeon, flogged by a detestable wretch, whose name was Casey, and who as he laid the lash over my back, grinned with a fiend’s delight, till the fire leaped out of his dark eyes. Every morning regularly I was stripped to my shirt, hoisted on the back of a boy, and belaboured with a cane, till my shrieks re-echoed through the long

room, and I writhed in bloody agony. When I complained to my mother, I got no sympathy, but a cool assurance that if I were not so great a rascal, dunce, and liar, I should fare better. I was not alone, indeed, in my misery. Our school was a field of blood—like the Hakeldama of the Jews. We suffered like galley slaves under the whip, and were fiends and tyrants to one another. It was horrible to hear our cries and screams when the hour of torture came; but we might as well have attempted to melt the marble sphynx of Egypt into sympathy as this hardened cannibal, Casey, whose name I thus preserve in pickle as an example to future pedagogues.

One day, as I suppose, I had been more indolent than usual, and the master was determined to make an example of me. The fact was I was sick of my life, and I scarcely cared to learn a lesson. When I knew it well, I got no praise; when I knew it indifferently, I was mercilessly flogged. It was a lesson in English Grammar, wholly uninteresting to the mind of a boy. And I had now fed my fancy on works of imagination —“The Seven Champions of Christendom,”

“The History of Prince Arthur,” and the marvellous adventures of “Robinson Crusoe”; so that it required something more entertaining than nouns, pronouns, or prepositions, their rise, history, and use, to impress anything about them upon my memory. Casey prepared himself for the task. He pulled up his coat cuffs, and exposed his great heavy hands and wrists, which were not very clean. He wielded a large and flexible cane, which was four feet long. I was, as usual commanded to strip. I did so, for resistance was useless, and I was subdued and tamed into a negro’s submissiveness. I was then hoisted on the back of the strongest and biggest boy in the school. The first lash shot through my tender frame as I have seen a mighty wave leap upon a small ship, until every plank quivers with the dreadful shock, and she seems to have got her death blow. So ran that thrill through every muscle, vein, and fibre. I quivered beneath it. A fierce delight appeared to animate and nerve Casey’s arm. He flogged and flogged apparently for ever, until the boy on whose back I was, at length flung me down, and saying he

would serve no longer, escaped into a corner. I fell on the floor ; Casey still struck me savagely. I clung about his legs and knees ; I screamed, I implored mercy ; I made a thousand promises. Frenzy seemed to seize him. He would not, or he could not cease. The whole demon was upon him.

At length I fainted ; I foamed at the mouth. I remained senseless for an hour. I was subsequently told that Casey then got frightened, and bathed my head and limbs with cold water and other restoratives, but in vain. I was carried home on a litter and lay in bed for several weeks, not quite sane, as I have since heard—certainly with only a dim recollection of what I had endured. Nature took compassion on me, and dipped the horrid scene in Lethe. My mother never came near me after the first day. She said it was only what a dunce and a liar deserved, and I was left wholly to the care of servants. I verily believe she would have sent me back again when I recovered, but one of her sisters, my Aunt Evelyn, interposed ; and I was rescued, almost by chance, from the fangs of this accursed wretch.

A brief interval now passed before I was again sentenced to hell. Alas! that it should have been so brief. I lingered by the sunny banks and watched the fish disporting. I wished to join them. They had no lessons, no grammar, no pedagogues among them. I did not know or think that even they had their tormentors, their Caseys in the shape of pikes. They seemed so happy in the sun that I have often felt tempted to leap in and join in their play. Again I looked up into the sky. The birds sang; every blooming spray danced, to their delight; their whole hearts seemed bursting with ecstacy. I went over my favourite books of adventure and romance, and from their contrast with the jail from which I had been rescued, derived a novel interest. I fancied myself a hero, a knight, a prince, an enchanted wanderer in enchanted lands. What marvellous exploits I performed; what castles I besieged, what giants I slew; what royal damsels I delivered from bondage. The whole earth possessed not such a hero; the whole of Christendom resounded with my glory. I was the favourite champion of all the feeble. I was

the honoured guest of kings and emperors; magicians trembled at my name; the most fell enchanters owned their weakness when in my golden armour I appeared, and thundered at their brazen forts or battlements of steel. Suddenly these faërie dreams were dispelled, and I was again informed that I must prepare for school. Horror seized me. I felt like Job when that Spirit which made the hair of his flesh stand up passed before his eyes—“Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones shake.” I had five guineas in my pocket—the wealth of Crœsus to a boy—with which I immediately made a flight to Oxford. This was in 1725. I found myself in the High Street. It was fair time. The place was filled with booths, puppet shows, and menageries, and seemed to offer an inexhaustible source of joy. As I was gazing on these wonders, a tall youth, with a merry eye and lip, a long nose, and an arch smile, came up and said, “Hallo! Wortley, what are you doing here?”—dragged me away into one of the puppet shows. It was my cousin, Harry Fielding, then a youth only a little older than myself, who had

made a nearly similar escape from Eton, but with not so well filled a purse. We both recounted our adventures to each other, and laughed heartily at the fancied dismay of our parents. We went from show to show, devouring ginger-bread nuts and apples, until we were entirely gorged ; Fielding drawing on me as if I were old Drummond the goldsmith, and scattering about our silver among the columbines and clowns—the former of whom he kissed and cuddled to the immense delight of the populace, while he joked with the latter in the broadest style ; which produced peals of laughter from the chawbacons and their sweethearts. I think we passed the night in a round house, but we both drank so much wine that I can scarcely say with certainty. The debauch, however, was unlucky, for the constables having discovered who we were, communicated the fact to some of the dons, and we were both next day packed back to our respective houses, under the guardianship of one of the preservers of the peace, who gave us many a sage admonition on the road, to which I fear we paid no attention. My Lady Mary received me with

her usual demonstration of love—a hearty flogging—I was now eleven years old—and confined me to my room on bread and water for three days, when I was removed in custody, only not handcuffed or chained, to another physician of the mind.

My new master was one Porter ; he was L.L.D. of some university, but I think it was Satan conferred on him his degree. He was tall, thin, and slightly grey haired. His eye was like a piece of stone ; there was a frigid light in the lower part of it which made one shudder. His mouth was hard and firm ; his forehead showed self-conceit ; his bearing was quick, despotic, and unfeeling. He was an accomplished man, but a most hardened scoundrel. His torture was refined. It was wholly different from Casey's ; the latter was a vulgar brute, who merely tormented the body ; but Porter was a subtle inquisitor ; he spared your flesh, but made your heart and spirit writhe. He filled you with self-contempt, self-loathing ; he looked at you as if you were some misshapen beast ; he grinned, he sneered, he curled his lip in scorn, until you felt disposed to fall on your

knees, and ask the rod in mercy. Never was any wretchedness greater than that which we endured under this miscreant. We hated him, we detested ourselves; the whole world seemed one vast theatre of horror. This mental slavery was perfect in its way. I have read of a man who was put into a hollow pillar, which was gradually heated to a white glow, and the wretch expired piecemeal. In such a pillar I seemed to move and abide under this odious villain, until I quivered with affright when I heard his foot ascend the stairs, or listened to his harsh voice echo through the house. It gave me the notion of the links of a chain used only to fetter criminals, and lead them to execution. This was our classical teacher; in mathematics we were under the tuition of a fellow named Douglas, a vulpine coloured knave. I hated him the moment I saw him. You will ask me why? It was not merely from a boy's impulsive instinct, but his breath stunk horribly; it was something rank, putrid, most offensive. My nerves and organs were finely constituted; this defect disgusted their delicacy, and I never could bear to go near him. Yet near him I was forced

to go, and this also constituted a new and most dreadful punishment. Mathematics I hated ; Euclid, algebra, arithmetic—all the horrid jargon of science were odious to me. I failed and failed, and utterly failed, until Douglas gave me up ; he treated me with contempt, and telling me “I should never set the Thames on fire,” he gave me his worst mark, with a satirical and contumelious grin that entered into my soul. Why did he not honestly tell me that I could not learn the rubbish ? Because he revelled so heartily in the suffering of others, and took such a dislike to me, from the antipathy of our two natures, that he could not bear to relinquish the power of punishment, which his tutelage over me gave ; and he took vengeance on me because he saw me turn away my face every time he came near and breathed balefully upon me. I would rather have borne the hardest blow at any time than have inhaled this serpent’s odour. I shrank from it. He saw this. If he knew why I did so I suppose he hated me the more—a personal defect discovered, inflicts pain on the possessor of it, which he repays with an undying thirst of vengeance.

Five days in every week we were subjected to these dreadful ordeals. On the sixth day (Saturday) was our day of judgment. The marks of the whole week were then added up. We had what were called judgment books, in which all our shortcomings for all the preceding days were noted under separate heads. These were computed, and according to our approach or retrocession from a fixed number, which was the perfect one—I think it was thirty—was our corporeal chastisement. For fancy not, O wondering reader, that bodily correction was banished from this academic grove. By no means, but it was in a different department. A man named Hamblin, who was Porter's partner in the establishment, was the executioner. Porter and Douglas, having wasted all their spite and tormented your mind till it could endure no more, then handed you over to the hangman, who was to finish you off and dismiss you to the Sabbath-day with a temper beautifully attuned for the Sunday lesson of charity, mildness, peace and good will to all men. We were paraded in a long line before Hamblin ; each trembling truant with his judgment book in

his hand ; the minister of punishment at our head with his long whip. Each was examined in turn, each was flogged according to his book, and then sent off with a satirical *courage mon ami* from the hangman, which seemed the bitterest of all. Why we did not drown, or hang, or shoot ourselves, seems now a mystery to me ; but it is wonderful what an amount of suffering boys will endure before they finally rebel.

All my days during this period were days of misery. Night brought me no repose. I slept in a long attic all alone, and soon discovered from the servants' talk that the house was haunted. They had the most curious tales of horror. I listened to these till my blood ran cold, and I could feel it like a frozen rivulet in my heart. Hamblin's wife had a mark under her left eye—a slight mark, like a scar, and when you looked at it but for a second, she winced under your glance as if in dread. I once asked the girl who most usually attended me what it was, and heard as follows :—

“ Misses's father was, they say, a parson somewhere in the north, and though one of

the cloth, was as bad a man as the country held. He was covetous, too, like all parsons, and always greedy after money ; so that some folks did say he was ready to sell his soul to the devil for pelf ; but for my part, I do not believe that the devil is fool enough to give money for any mortal souls, when he can get so many on 'em for nothing. However this may be, there was a kitchen garden attached to his glebe house, and this garden, like a grasping old huncks as he was, he began to extend from time to time into the churchyard, which was one of great extent, and when the horses were ploughing it up they disturbed the bones, and smashed in the coffins, and broke the skulls, and knocked the dead about in the most shameful manner. And his wife, misses's mother, wept sorely, and did all she could to change the avaricious old brute ; but he went on, heedless of God or man, encroaching more and more every year on the place devoted to the dead, and his eldest daughter, Mrs. Hamblin, who was most like himself, backed him up, and abused her mother, who died at last of vexation and affright. Well, when the turnips or

parsnips were brought to table, they used to be full of human teeth and bits of bones, and they say the celery and cucumbers dropped blood ; and at last no one would eat, nor would any neighbour buy anything grown in the field, and the parson got almost mad, and his daughter told him to gather up all the bones and fragments, and have them burned or thrown into the river, and then all would go well. So the parson employed a lot of men to grub 'em up, and they were cast without a sigh, or prayer, or blessing, into the river ; and that very night as the daughter was lying in bed, an old lady rustling all in rich silks came into her bedroom, and looking proudly and fiercely at her, flung something which hit her straight under the eye. Then the old lady laughed, and misses immediately jumped up and screamed out, and the whole house was alarmed ; and she told them what had happened, and the parson began to curse and swear, and said he would send the old lady to the Red Sea, and he ordered everyone out of the bedroom. But from that night to the present time, misses has lost the sight of that very eye, and they say

wherever she goes, the spirits follow her, and don't let her sleep in her bed, but are always worrying her; but how that may be, no one except herself and her husband knows; but for my part, I believe that nothing goes right here after midnight, and I have often thought of running away and drowning myself at the things I hear and see."

This story set me half mad. I remember well the day after the first night I heard it. I ran home in a frenzy; I rushed into my mother's presence, I fell on my knees, and pathetically implored her to take me home, or send me to another school, before I should grow wholly mad, or fling away my life in disgust. My lady coolly rang for a servant, and I was conveyed back in disgrace and bondage, where a hearty thrashing awaited and rewarded me. I was then paraded before the boys, and crowned with a large goat's head and horns; on my back was pinned a paper with these words, "Liar! Coward!" and was stuck up on a stool in the most conspicuous corner of the school-room, and remained the centrepiece of mockery and laughter, and I suppose contempt,

for the remainder of the day. My heart was almost throbless ; but my brain burned like red hot embers, and a flood of hatred of life, mankind, God, my parents, my country, and every conceivable object, rushed through my entire being, drenching it with livid bitterness. I remember that day still. It was the first of disgrace I had endured. Torture and punishment I had hitherto borne without repining ; indeed, I had grown vain of my back, which was perfectly callous and horny from repeated floggings, and half defied the cane of Hamblin. But this stigma now branded on me seemed indelible, and I was mad with rage and suffering.

The night that followed that day—shall it ever pass out of my mind ? I was locked up in my attic, supperless and wretched. As I lay on my hard bed, I heard two deep drawn sighs that sounded quite close to my pillow. An electric chill passed through me ; I felt as if a hand of death, cold, colder than ice, was drawn over my face. I covered my head up in the quilt, I trembled, I screamed in agony ; but my screams were inaudible. I seemed as if enveloped in a cloud,

out of which no sound could penetrate. Darkness palpable was around me, but I could see it illuminated as if by pale light. Then a gaunt shape all bones, with an enormous head, stood right over me, and looked out of the threatening eyes with all the force of hell and hate. I swooned, and when I woke to consciousness, found myself in the arms of the friendly domestic, who had already narrated to me some of her own experiences of this loathed mansion. She bathed my head, she soothed me with her hand, she spake words of comfort, but I heard them not. Only a confused vision of home, and grinning eyes, and bloodless phantoms, seemed to roll in clouds before my mind's vision ; but at last she lulled me into forgetfulness by a low wild plaintive song ; the lament of a young girl hanged for child murder, and of which I only remember these words, whose melancholy music still haunts me—

Next day I fled from Porter's, never to return.

Away, away, down by the green fields, beside the sparkling open river, glorious, golden in the laughing sunshine, inhaling the perfumed winds that stole their fragrance from the flowers, by the high road through vales and villages, anywhere, anywhere so as not to school, or equally detested home. I found myself hungry and exhausted in a great city, which I soon knew was London. I was finely dressed, but I had not a penny in my pocket, and I had not tasted food all day. Still, my heart failed not, for I fled from worse than death, and threw myself into the whirlpool of life, hopeful, confident, brimful of bright expectations. I knew not whither I was going, or how I was to live. I cared not what became of me, until my escape was secured, so I wandered on and on, not even staying to look into the brilliant shops, that flashed with gold and silver, and all the treasures of a great capital. At length darkness rushed on me, but in a brief space the streets were lighted up, carriages rattled by, preceded by link boys ; the vivid life of the day seemed still to extend into the night, and all was glitter, gaiety and splendour. As I stood in a dark recess and

watched the noisy crowd of equipages whirled by, I noted a chariot bearing the Montagu arms; and leaning back on the soft cushions I saw my mother superbly dressed, and looking haughtily on the humble pedestrians. Beside her was a man whom I afterwards knew to be Lord Hervey, but I did not then have the honour of his acquaintance. She looked methought into the very place where I was hiding; if she saw me, she took no notice of the runaway, but laughed and smiled upon her companion, who was blazing with finery; but had a languid effeminate air, which filled me with utter scorn for the fopling. My tongue was silent, but I could feel as if my heart grew ice in her presence; I did not curse her, but I felt hatred. As to my father, I thought of him not. He had never treated, or even looked at me as his son; to me his face was cold and hard; he had invariably repelled me whenever I approached him. From the first moment that I can remember we have been strangers, perhaps foes. What was there between him and me that I should seek him now?

Hitherto I had not once faltered. I now grew very

faint with hunger. I looked around me and began to feel afraid. I was alone in wide London. There was no friendly home to welcome me ; no warm hand to clasp mine and lead me to a shelter. Everyone I saw pass by, seemed to scrutinize me with curious gaze. I looked up to heaven and saw the stars, and wished to be among them. “ They,” thought I, “ would be my friends. They are so bright, so glorious, so beneficent, they would receive and shelter me. Oh ! that I could fly away to them for ever. How shall I get food ? I have no money to buy it—nobody seems to offer it me ? Anyone can see that I am hungry, and almost dead, yet no one offers to take me in. Yet one thing is clear—I shall see no ghost to-night ; I shall hear no whisper from hell murmured into my ear ; I shall feel no hand of Satan laid across my heart. And if I wake in the morning somewhere—if ever I do wake, I shall escape a flogging and a fool’s cap, and the jeers and gibes of Lane and Bennett.” These were two wretches in the school who had singled me out for persecution ; and added to my other torments by perpetual irritation, and petty annoyance. I often felt as

if I could poignard them, but they were big coarse boys, and a blow from either has frequently stunned me for even minutes.

While I was thus musing, a sigh or two, I suppose, escaped me. I certainly felt sorrowful enough. A hundred anxious thoughts ran through my soul. The full danger of my situation now for the first time occurred to me. I was accosted by a short stout man, with a very square, full face, a round chin, deep dark eyes of the most earnest expression, his own black hair, a plain brown suit, and a fine cravat, tied very loosely round his neck. He leaned on a thick walking stick with a massive gold head. His presence was assuring, and his smile had something of a charm in it—the magic of a quick benevolence. He looked at me for some time before he spoke, as if meditating how he should begin, but he finally came up to me, and with a rich Irish accent, that was not destitute of soft melody, thus addressed me—

“ How now, youngster, in the fine coat—what are you doing here at this time of night? Waiting for your mistress, eh ? ”

I was startled, but I had plenty of courage, so I said—

“Not waiting for a mistress, for here is no need to wait, when they pass up and down in such numbers; but wondering what I shall do with myself.”

“You are very difficult to please, I suppose, that you hesitate so much. But if you take my counsel, you will go home to your mother, and get your supper, unless, indeed, you prefer a rheumatism.”

“I like one part of your counsel, but not the other.”

“And pray which part, young gentleman, may that be?”

“That which counsels a supper I approve; that which recommends home, I disapprove.”

“Upon my word you are a pretty youth, and I suppose you are now hesitating between Burgundy or Champagne, Will’s or Button’s?”

“I never heard of either, old gentleman, but I feel hungry.”

“Then step with me to the next tavern, and order what you will. I should like to sup with a youngster of your spirit.”

“And pray, sir, who may you be that thus accost me, and invite yourself so freely?”

“Well, I am called by my friends Dick Steele, by my creditors Sir Richard Steele, by the literary world, Steele the Scribbler. Which do you like best?”

“The first, certainly, so let us go.”

“And now, sir, that I have answered your bold question, may I take the respectful liberty of asking from which of the planets you have dropped? You don’t seem to know much of London, to be ignorant of Will’s and Button’s.”

“Sir Richard Steel, that is a question I won’t answer? so go your ways.”

“Well, I shan’t press you; but come with me; you seem a rare lad, and I should like half-an-hour’s chat with you.”

We entered the first tavern we saw. My host, for so he appeared to be, ordered a splendid supper, but asked me no more questions, for he saw that I was not disposed to be communicative, and he was too fine a gentleman to press me for my secret. He enjoyed the relish with which I evidently discussed the various delicacies, and

entertained me with agreeable discourse, speaking to me all the time as if I were his equal in every respect, and making me laugh by his whimsical, deep, yet witty observations on all around us. He quickly put me into the most perfect good humour with myself and all the world, and I felt half tempted to tell who I was. An accident saved me. Just as I was on the point of opening my heart, one of the drawers came up, and said—

“Sir Richard, here is a note from Mr. Montagu, he wishes to see you as soon as possible.”

“Ah, Ned Montagu,” says Sir Richard, “I wonder what mare’s nest he has now found that he wants me so speedily. But I shall see him tomorrow. Meanwhile, young gentleman, what ails you?”

“Nothing; I was only thinking where I should get a bed.”

“Now by all the gods and goddesses of Olympus, thou art a perfectly unaccountable and mysterious youth. Why can you not sleep here, if you won’t go home? Or why can’t you fly back to Mercury, from which I suppose you fell?”

“Simply because the inns in Mercury are closed for the night, and I don’t possess a farthing to pay for one here.”

“Then, my boy, you shall come home to my house, and stay with me as long as you please; or at all events, until you go back to your mother, or Mercury, or wherever else you have escaped from.”

“Then I fear I shall remain for some time, as I don’t feel inclined to go back at all.”

“With all my heart, with all my heart; and boy, you shall be welcome to all I can supply—welcome as my own flesh and blood. Here, drawer, discharge the reckoning.”

And flinging a guinea to the man, he rose up. When he had received his change we got into the street. Two dogged-looking fellows were lurking outside the door, and immediately came up.

“Sir Richard, I beg your pardon, but you are wanted.”

“Am I, indeed? Tell your master I can’t come.”

“My master is the sheriff, Sir Richard, and he will take no refusal.”

“At whose suit is this new invitation?”

“Flounce, your tailor, Sir Richard. The debt is—”

“Pooh! never mind.” And he sighed. “Well, I suppose I must go. But, young gentleman, as you can’t go home with me, for the Sheriff of Middlesex wants me on pressing business, I suppose you need a couple of guineas. Would that they were twenty.”

And he gave them to me while they took him away.

I scarcely now remember whether I then knew the full meaning of all this. The impression at the time on my mind was one of deep gratitude to this unknown friend, who had thus, almost by miracle, dropped on me from Heaven, and saved me from famishing. Why was he thus compelled to leave me?—to depart in the company of those two bold shabby-looking fellows, who seemed strange lacqueys from the Sheriff of Middlesex. A couple of link boys standing near, and who had seen the occurrence, soon enlightened me.

“Ah! there he goes,” says one, “for the five

hundredth time nabbed by the bloodhounds—the merriest man in England, and the most open hearted. His wife will miss him for some days.”

“Aye,” says the other, “and I am sure he regrets it more for her sake than his own. He is a noble fellow. You remember Jack Hall. Well, when he was run over by that infernal old rogue Montagu, who has twenty millions of gold in the Bank of England, Sir Richard never ceased, night nor day, till he made him give twenty pounds to his mother, and got a promise from him that when the boy was well he would apprentice him to some trade where his hurt limb would not interfere with his calling; for he could flash a link no more.”

“Aye, and that was not the only fine thing he did. There was Tom Brown——”

But here they walked on, and I heard no more. I could almost cry; but where was the good of that? I returned to the inn and ordered a bed. But I never saw Sir Richard Steele again. He died soon after.

When I rose in the morning I scarcely knew

how I should act. I was determined to seek my fortune, and go in quest of adventures. I had read “*Gil Blas*” in French at school, and thought I should do as well as him. The shifting variety of scenes, and circumstances, and characters ; the independence, the wild gaiety, the change of place and condition fascinated me. Why should not my life also be a romance ? Why should it not be narrated by some future *Le Sage* ? Or should I go to sea, and like *Robinson Crusoe*, find myself the monarch of some Paradise Island in the Southern Ocean, where all was sunshine and repose ? Anything was preferable to home, and school, and the cane, and the sneers and sarcasms, and the phantoms. Now that they had begun, I felt certain if I once got back again they would haunt me for ever—perhaps bear me away body and soul into perdition, and leave no trace of me behind. But whatever I did I must resolve on straight. I was only twenty miles from my tyrants ; I was not quite twelve from my mother and her myrmidons. Both would soon, no doubt, be after me, and further and more extended flight

was absolutely necessary. After breakfast I left the tavern, and proceeded along the streets until I got into the high road at the other side of the Thames.

## CHAPTER IX.

“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

I now discovered that I could do nothing until I got rid of my fine clothes. I had a predilection for a vagrant life, and I resolved to gratify it. A hundred different projects crossed my mind. Should I be a soldier?—for that I was too young; —a sailor?—for that I was not big or strong enough; and though I canvassed the advantages of being a cabin boy, the ills and necessities to which it would subject me seemed to more than counterbalance the rollicking freedom which it promised. I did not much care for the toil or hardship, and I was charmed by the quick variety

and change of scene into which it would lead me, but I did not like the notion of cleaning the sailor's shoes, or washing up their dirty dishes. An errand boy did not promise variety enough ; nor a link boy present security ; for though I had half made up my mind to figure in this last-named disguise, I luckily recollect ed in time that as my avocations would necessarily lead me into fashionable society, I should there run the most extreme daily risk of being discovered, and dragged home with ignominy. I never asked myself why it was absolutely necessary that I should be anything but what I was ; but took it for granted that it was my kismet or destiny, as the Orientals call it, and obeyed unerring instinct. Of one thing I was sure, that as at home I was detested and despised, and at school flogged into fits, any condition of life was better than either of these ; and as I had too much of my father's practical prosaic spirit to fling myself into the Thames, so I had enough of my mother's errant blood to drive me into odd adventures, which had, in the distance, a vague, indistinct shadowy charm for my wandering imagination.

I once meditated a good deal upon the advisability of joining some strolling players. Here would be variety of adventure, quite enough, I thought, to gratify my ardent longings. But on reflection I dismissed the notion. I saw no prospect of the pleasure that I desired. I was a mere stripling, and could, of course, be of histrionic use only on the rarest occasions. The fine gilded dresses and waving feathers which appeared so captivating in the distance, would be forbidden fruit to me until I was some years older, and I should also be a dependent, and wholly devoid of that wild freedom for which I panted. On full consideration it seemed to me that the business of a sweep was that for which I was best suited, and which also promised the most agreeable incidents. I thought what a fine thing it would be to go from house to house, and from room to room ; to-day in a nobleman's palace, to-morrow in a cobbler's lodging ; this hour penetrating the interior of some old manor house, full of quaint passages and secret recesses, every one of which concealed a romance ; and the next strolling into the country, and diving through the ivied walls

of some rustic cot, surrounded by trees and green fields, or gazing over the wide expanse from the highest summit of some lordly castle of the feudal time. The curious in metaphysics may enquire how or why it was, that I, with all my patrician blood, had these vulgar notions? I have never examined into the reason myself. It was odd, but it is true. If I were disposed to search into it, vanity would no doubt come to my aid, and I should liken myself to the glorious Caliph Harûn al Raschid, who, though commander of the east, and lord of all the beauty and the splendour of his imperial post, was never more happy than when, disguised as a merchant, or a slave, he strolled with his faithful Giaffar through the streets of Bagdad, and in its manifold phases of human existence forgot the cares of empire, the demands of domestic duty, and the supposed instincts of royal blood. But the truth is that these same notions about royal or noble blood are all arrant nonsense. There is no instinct after truly great or noble things necessarily among people of high descent. On the contrary, my observation of them, and I have seen

them all *intus et in curte*, has convinced me that, as a general rule, the higher we ascend in the social scale the more base and ignoble is the taste. “The only steps to the favour of the Great,” writes Pope to Gay (and the little monkey well knew it, having passed through all), “are such complacencies, such compliances, such distant decorums, as delude them in their vanities, or engage them in their passions. *He is their greatest favourite who is the falsest*; and when a man by such vile gradations arrives at the height of grandeur and power, he is then at best but in a circumstance to be hated, and in a condition to be hanged for serving their ends.” So many a minister has found it! I know half-a-dozen dukes and marquises, who spend all their lives in the cockpit; and in bear-baiting, bull-dog fighting, boxing, and rat catching, find the true Elysium of existence. I know a dozen earls and lords who roam from bagnio to bagnio, and from gaming table to gaming table, cursing, drinking, swearing, and talking smut with infinitely more gusto than I ever heard among the lowest members of the mob. I know scores and scores of viscounts, barons, and

members of Parliament, who have no ideas beyond ale tankards and pipes, and who spend their lives in dirty little amours with dirty little doxies, and fancy that Paradise means this and nothing more. All these people are of ancient descent, and baronial pedigree, and have genealogies and rent rolls, and picture galleries, and muniment rooms, and are “gracious,” “most noble,” “right honourable,” and so forth; but if you could see their souls, you would only behold some mean and frog-like little abortions, squatting over a pool of dirt, and wholly incapable of one generous sentiment. And so it is with their lady wives, and mothers, and daughters, whose tastes are quite as low, base, and despicable (with all their grand blood), as those that belong to their noble lords and masters.

The picture of English life and manners which I draw, may appear to the inexperienced unreal, tinctured with misanthropy, and over-coloured by a satirical spleen. But in truth it is not so; it is in all things literally accurate, historically true. Anyone who will consult the memoirs of the period can ascertain this. My mother's own

Letters and Works will themselves prove all that I have written. Before my volume be condemned let those be studied, and then let who will, throw stones upon my grave. To the ignorant or weak this memoir may appear parricidal; to the base and time serving, who know nothing of the facts, my delineation of Lady Mary may appear to be that of a matricide. In future days the partisans of Bute (who having married my sister, is now revelling in my father's ill-gotten money) will halloo against my name, and cover it with obloquy. Let them read and understand before they do so. What respect could I have for either father or mother when I knew their inner lives and odious associates? My mother herself has left Memoirs and Diaries descriptive of them; and if these should ever be seen, what will they not reveal? But that Scotch minion of the Princess, and his lickspittle wife will take care of that; they will burn them with zealous care. Though of high descent, my mother there confesses that she was on the most intimate terms with the infamous Kilmanseg—one of the old King's mistresses; and with Craggs, who she tells us was “in the

closest engagement" with another, namely Madam Platen. This horrid woman left her husband, and voluntarily presented herself to the doting old king to be his paramour. Her own mother had been mistress to the king's father. "She was naturally gallant," says Lady Mary, writing of Platen, and as the king could only "cut paper" in his mistress's apartments she "pursued her warmer inclinations," and intrigued with Craggs, who was recommended by her to Majesty, and became Secretary of State for this kingdom of ours. He got engaged in the South Sea swindle, by which he gained enormous sums, and was mixed up with Lady Mary's dabbling in lotteries, and in that odious scheme by which so many innocent thousands—widows and orphans—were reduced to ruin. Cragg's father was originally footman to the Duchess of Norfolk, and procured men for her, "as she always had half-a dozen intrigues to manage." He was engaged in the same honourable employment by King James II., and the Duke of Marlborough, who hired him "as procurer, both for women and money,"—that is, as

the medium by which he negotiated his seductions and his bribes—for none was ever wickeder than Churchill.

In this way Craggs, senior, amassed a large fortune; got into Parliament amid the other pimps of the period, and was in the South Sea robbery, with his son, the Secretary; was made Postmaster-general by his infamous employer, to whom he continued to pander to the last, and, dying after his right honourable son, gave occasion to old Le Neve, the herald to make this epitaph on him—“*Here lies the last who died before the first of his family.*” All this my mother knew and has herself related.

Yet of this Craggs, who rose to eminence by surrendering his person to one of the King’s mistresses, Pope had the ineffable baseness to write an epitaph, which still disgraces and pollutes Westminster Abbey, whose dean has not the courage or decency to erase it; and where all well-bred people are compelled to read an apotheosis of a scoundrel.

Another of our intimate friends at this time was Methuen, afterwards Sir Paul, who, seeing

the means by which power was to be obtained, and finding Platen pre-engaged, became the favourite of old Madame Kilmanseg, “whose constitution,” says Lady M., “inclined her to gallantry, she seeming to have rather Lord Rochester’s resolution of avoiding all sorts of self-denial.” Methuen was not ashamed to be taken into the protection of this hag ; by which debasement he became a Lord of the Treasury, Secretary of State, and finally Treasurer of the Household. He was one of Pope’s virtuous allies ; and notwithstanding his infamy, was a member of the highest circles, as the lowest wretches are commonly called. Schulenberg, another of my mother’s friends, finding that her own day had gone by, and that the King no longer cared for her (she being now three score), observing also that harlotry was the only road to eminence, and that there were hundreds of our fine gentlemen ready to be her accomplices ; she, I say, actually brought over her own niece or daughter from Hanover, and offered her to the Prince of Wales—afterwards George the Second—in which she was supported by Bern-

stoff, “artful, avaricious, and designing, who had got his share in the King’s councils by bribing his women.” This fellow, intending to keep his master wholly in his own and Schulenberg’s hands, dissuaded Platen from coming to England, telling her that the English would cut her head off; but Platen was too cunning to believe him, and so she came. In this plot he had for his associates Walpole, who had been expelled from the House for corruption, and Townsend, who had married Walpole’s handsome sister, Dolly, she having been already debauched by King Charles’s boon companion, the old Marquis of Wharton; the Marchioness herself, who studied her lord in all things, having been actually a party to the plot in which the poor girl was ruined under her own roof at Winchenden. Lady Mary describes this Lady W. as “a woman equally unfeeling and unprincipled; flattering, fawning, canting, affecting prudery, and even sanctity, yet in reality as abandoned and unscrupulous as her husband himself.” Yet she herself was almost domesticated with this person; was a cordial ally of her daughter Jane; and is

generally believed to have been on the same terms of intimacy with her son Philip—from whom she won loads of money—as she is popularly thought to have been with Congreve and Hervey; her love verses to both of whom, one ending—

“This meek epistle comes to tell  
On Monday I, in town shall dwell,  
Where, if you please to condescend,  
In Cavendish Square to see your friend,  
I shall disclose to you alone,  
Such thoughts as ne'er were thought upon.”

can leave leave no doubt of her position towards them. Hence the fiery sting of Pope’s verse in which she is called Artemisia, the chaste and faithful wife of King Mausolus, whose ashes she swallowed. An elder brother of this Lord, Carr, was the father of Horace Walpole, to Sir Robert’s own certain knowledge, and, indeed, it may almost be said with his consent and approbation; while Sir Robert passed his easy hours with Polly Skerrett, a low girl from Holborn, a most intimate visitor at our house, even while she was living openly as the mistress of the minister, and the mother of his babes. Of our cousin Lord Halifax, called Mouse Montagu, I need not

speak. He is the *Bufo*, that is the *Toad* of Pope, and he had all the qualities of that reptile. The old Duchess of Marlborough said, “There never was a falser man than Lord Halifax was,” and, indeed, she never said a truer word.

Nor was it footmen only like Craggs and Stephen Fox, or their ignoble breed, who rose to power and peerages by the most ignoble means—by pandering and procuring. The stream of morals flowing from the Court, ran into Leicester Fields to the Prince of Wales, whom my mother condemns for not reflecting that a high rank carries along with it a necessity of a more decent and regular behaviour than is expected from those who are not set in so conspicuous a light. He was so far from being of that opinion, that he looked on all the men and women he saw as creatures he might kick or kiss for his diversion; and whenever he met with any opposition in these designs he thought his opponents insolent rebels to the will of God, who created them for his use, and judged of the merit of all people by their ready submission to his orders. He was equally well mated, his Princess having,

according to the same authority, “ that genius which qualified her for the government of a fool, and made her despicable in the eyes of men of sense ; I mean a low cunning, which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with, and often cheated herself in the first place, by showing her the wrong side of her interest ; not having understanding enough to observe that falsehoods in conversation, like red on the face, should be used very sparingly, or they destroy that interest and beauty which they are designed to heighten. Her first thought on her marriage was to secure to herself the sole and whole direction of her spouse ; and to that purpose she counterfeited the most extravagant fondness for his person ; yet at the same time so devoted to his pleasures (which she told him were the rule of all her thoughts and actions) that whenever he thought proper to find them with other women, she even loved whoever was instrumental to his entertainment, and never resented anything, &c., &c.” And the highest people in the land, seeing what prevailed both with the king and his son, shaped their morals

accordingly. Hence seduction and adultery, drunkenness and cheating, every form of corruption, political and moral, was universal. Princess Amelia intrigued openly with the Duke of Grafton (who intrigued also with Lord Burlington's Countess) and was said to have amused herself in the same way with Hervey, who himself made no secret that he seduced Miss Vane, thus helping her brother Harry to his earldom. Pope called Hervey "a sharper in a gilded chariot," but he was in truth far worse. George II. never met Lady Deloraine, who was one of his mistresses, without addressing her in the most filthy language, nor did he behave to another of them much better ; I mean Lady Archibald Hamilton, who was another man's wife ; and at the sober age of thirty-five was as grossly shameless as if she had been but twenty. Yet for this woman's son the Duke of Cumberland stood publicly as godfather, and no bishop was found to rise up and protest. On the contrary the bishops, one and all, dangled about the Court, and paid obeisance to the adulteresses in vogue. Of the whole crew whom we were in the habit of meet-

ing, there was only one for whom I really felt sorry ; poor Sophia Howe, one of the maids of honour—a laughing, happy, charming girl, with whom I went to Farnham Church when I was a little boy. I remember well her childlike gaiety, that seemed to radiate from eyes, and face, and mouth like a sunbeam. Another year and what was this happy creature ?—the victim of seduction, abandoned by the world, and dying in solitude and shame of a broken heart. So jogs life on, and so we all walk merrily to ruin. It was in answer to this poor soul's question—“ What is prudery ? ” that Pope wrote :—

“ What is prudery ? 'Tis a beldam  
Seen with wit and beauty seldom ;  
'Tis a fear that starts at shadows ;  
'Tis, no 'tisn't like Miss Meadows,  
'Tis a virgin hard of feature,  
Old and void of all good nature,  
Lean and fretful, would seem wise,  
Yet plays the fool before she dies ;  
'Tis an ugly, envious shrew  
That rails at dear Lepel and you.”

lines that I feel sure did our poor Maid no good.

And now, my good friend, you who feel inclined to censure me, what sayest thou to this picture ? Can you wonder that it changed my

blood to poison, when I think that such was the society in which I found myself, and to which I was expected to conform? You may ask, *cui bono* all this exposure? I answer, *cui bono* all history, if it is not to illuminate us with knowledge of the past, and of the real characters of those who are set before us as the great of the earth? Can anything help more to make the mind philosophic, or to imbue it with content, if it should be fired by ambition, than to see how wealth and power are acquired; and that a man to get the world, or its goods, must lose his own soul in the pursuit? What homily or pulpit can give me a nobler scorn of vice, by general disquisitions on the subject, than those pictures of the actual living men and women who ruled the destinies of England for a period, and who, if they dazzle us while we are ignorant, disgust us when the domino is removed? It may be said—"But *you* should not do it." Well, perhaps there is something in this. I can only answer that no man is capable of forming a true opinion of that, unless he has passed through the hells which I have passed, and found himself, from his childhood,

an object of hatred, scorn, and persecution; in his manhood, a mark of contempt and poverty; in his old age a wanderer and outcast, while a hideous Scotchman was revelling in the treasure which, by all the laws of God and man, he only should possess. And his lady mother, spiteful to the last, bequeathed him, on her death-bed, a guinea, which proved to be real gold—unlike the emerald ring which she once gave as her passage-money to a sea captain, and which proved to be glass. Yet think not that I believe that all are vicious, and that decency is not to be found among the high as well as the humble. I hold no such vain opinion. There *are* exceptions, but these exceptions prove the rule; and if we examine the annals of mankind, from Julius Cæsar and Tiberius, down to Philip of Orleans and Frederick of Wales, we shall find that persons of high descent are generally the most mean, and dirty, and small-minded animals, with low tastes, and habits, and notions, seldom rising above the meanest trifles or the grossest filth.

In saying this, I expose myself, of course, to

the retort “*tu quoque.*” Well! I can’t help that. I have said what I believe to be God’s truth, so let it remain, despite all cavil or censure. If I wrote to please I should pen very different things; but I write to teach and exhibit, at all events, my own notions, such as they are. I have no doubt a great deal can and will be said on the other side, and I shall hear of “chivalry,” “knighthood,” “gallantry,” “the Norman blood,” “the line of Plantagenet,” and so on. But I never denied that these things exist, and have existed among those who call themselves the “aristocracy.” Heaven forfend that I should say that all were like those dukes and marquises whom I have seen and despised. I only illustrate by facts, that nobility of mind, though usually supposed to attend nobility of birth, is by no means an usual concomitant of that happy accident; and I do not hesitate to put myself forward as an example of the doctrine which I propound; for all my tastes have been to some extent what is called “low.” Like Diogenes, I have preferred my tub to a palace, and the presence of a sunbeam to the shadow of a

king. I could have rolled and revelled in wealth and pleasure if I had been a living lie. I could have eaten and drunk gold and pearls, if I had worn a mask on my face, and humoured my father in his avarice, and been an assentator to my mother in her coquettishness. But I was so low and vulgar a fellow that I could not do so. I preferred being a sweep or a gipsy, and I don't regret the preference. It is not the calling or the trade that is "low," but the man who is in it; and a sweep may have as high and noble a soul, and as truly gallant a spirit, as the greatest nobleman in the land. Nay, I have known sweeps who were the truly noble of nature, and noblemen who were far more vulgar than sweeps.

But let me leave all reveries of this kind to speculatists; and descending from the sphere of philosophy, let me alight again on sober facts.

A sweep, therefore, I determined to become—a falling off this from the Embassy, or the Treasury, from Carlton House and Cavendish Square—nevertheless it was so, and I lost no time in carrying out my project. I went early towards the city, resolved to change clothes with the first

sweep I met. But though he was a very little one, and had never read Lilly's Latin Grammar, he had more shrewdness than myself; and he soon convinced me that as my fine clothes would be of no use to him, and his rags would probably not fit me, our best plan was to go to Monmouth Street and equip at some Jew's shop, who would probably give us a guinea into the bargain, for my clothes were rich with lace and fine work, and were very nearly new. I readily embraced this proposal, and he shewed me the way to that famous emporium of old-new garments. We soon found a Jew, to whom I mentioned my desire to see a sweep's dress.

“Ach! mein Cott,” he said, “I does 'ave de finest sveep's dress dat ever vas in Engelterre, and you shall see it, and you shall wear it, and you shall be like von noble in de dress. Mein Cott, it is made exack for you, mein herr; mein Cott it is.”

I was soon disarrayed, and clothed anew in the honourable costume of a sweep; indeed it was only an old blanket (worth sixpence) and a cap value one penny.

“Ach! mein Cott,” exclaimed the Jew, “revare, nevare did I see von so fine a fit. Mein Cott, you do look like von fine young prince in dat fine dress. Look here, Rebecca, look at dis young gentleman-sveep,” and he called in an old withered jewess, who seemed his wife.

Rebecca was, of course, equally in love with “dis young gentleman sveep.” In the meantime, while I was absorbed about my new raiment, the good woman very carefully put aside my old dress, and fell into fresh raptures about my blanket. At length, when I was tired of being worshipped, I asked him what he was going to give me for my clothes? The Jew’s face instantly fell.

“Ach, mein Cott,” he said, “vhat do I hear? vhat do I hear from you? Mein Rebecca, mein vife—vhat is dis do I hear?”

Rebecca was evidently struck dumb with surprise; she spoke, however—

“Vy, my pretty gentleman, vhat vurdher do you vwant? Is not you have de sveep’s dress, and is not ve have your old dress? A bargain is a bargain, and dis vas de bargain, my tear.”

“ Oh dear no,” I answered, “ my good lady ; there was no bargain at all of the kind ; you are under a mistake. Come hand me over the difference.”

“ De difference—de difference ! vhat is de difference ? Me understand not dat vord.”

“ Why seeing that *my* clothes are worth about ten guineas, I think you ought to give me at least five on the exchange.”

“ Ach mein Cott,” cried the Jew, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven ; “ hear him, hear him ; de exchange. Ve have exchange ; vhat more do you vant ?”

“ I want the difference, I tell you—I will take four guineas.”

“ Five guineas, four guineas, de difference, de exchange. Vhat is all dis, vhat is de meaning of all dis ? Ah, my pretty gentlemans, you laugh, you mock de poor Jew man.”

I now began to get into a rage. I could not believe that the fellow’s ignorance of my meaning was sincere. I saw indeed it was a device to cheat me.

“ I tell you what, Mister Solomon,” I said, “ if

you don't give four guineas, I shall give you back your old blanket and put on my clothes again."

"Oh, mein Cott, mein Cott, here be one damn devil trick of dis young gentlemans. First of all you ax for de difference, den you ax for de five guineas, den you ax for de four guineas, den you ax for de exchange, den you ax to have your clothes back again, after you have changed dem vid me for dat beautiful sveep's dress. No, no, young gentlemans, I am an old man, and you must not play tricks vid de old. Go your vays, go your vays," and he began to push me out of the shop.

This was a catastrophe for which I was not quite prepared. I determined to resist so gross an imposition, but Rebecca now came to her husband's assistance.

"Ah, you pretty young gentlemans," she said, "go your vays quietly ; go and do not mock de poor old man, go your vays, and here is a ha'-penny," and she tendered me this splendid coin, still urging me towards the door. Her husband also gently impelled me—as the lawyers say *molliter manus imposuit*, when one man gives

another a hearty bang, heavy enough to fell an ox. I struggled, but what could I do? I was fairly, or rather foully thrust into the street, the old robber still crying out, “ Go your vays, vagabone, go your vays, vagabone ; von dam vagabone you be ; you vant to cheat poor man vid your guineas, and your four and your five, Cott dam, and your difference, and your exchange, Cott dam. Mein Cott, I never saw so young a rogue ; so deep, so deep as de river Thames, Cott dam. Ach, mein Cott, go your vays, go your vays, you must not stay in de vay, Cott dam,” and he slapped the door in my face, leaving me half frantic with passion.

This was a sorry prelude to the honourable profession on which I was entering. My poor little sweep companion seemed thunderstruck, but we both felt that we were powerless. With heavy hearts we departed, and I accompanied him to his master, who soon enrolled me as one of his supernumeraries without asking any disagreeable questions. There were five of us, all young sweeps with dark eyes, like Spaniards, and white teeth, and merry features, and in truth we were as

gamesome as so many trout in a pond. I soon formed a friendship for them, and many were the pranks we played. I was ten times happier than I ever had been at Cavendish Square or Twickenham. Aye, by Alla ! and I was happier than the Prince of Wales in Carlton House, or Leicester Fields, with all his Dodingtons around him.

I continued this life for some months. Many of my adventures were absurd. I had from the first made it a rule to do exactly as I pleased, and when I was sent up into one chimney, I very often descended down another. Many, consequently, were the discoveries which I made. I have appeared unexpectedly when a gallant was on his knees before another man's wife, and a grave and sober citizen was making love to a little *bona roba*, whose only income was her smiles. I have stolen into a room where a miser was counting his gold, and a married woman was reading the love letters of—not her husband. I have seen the clerk making up the false ledgers which were to defraud his master, and heard the thief-catchers plotting with the ladies of Hockley-in-the-Hole to betray this or that amorous highwayman to the gallows. I have seen the vintner

mixing drugs with his wines, and the grocer putting Epsom salts (deprived by fire of its medicinal qualities) into his sugar to give it the semblance of crystallization. I have come upon a gang of coiners (but here I narrowly escaped with life), and have heard a bevy of lady's maids scandalising their mistresses with several members of the peerage.

One night, or rather morning, about four o'clock, my master sent me up a chimney at a large hotel at the West End of the town. We were thus early, because it was requisite that the work should be done betimes, to give sufficient opportunity to prepare for a grand wedding breakfast. When I had completed my chimney I listened and heard oaths, blasphemies, and the sound of altercations; ascending an adjacent flue, I immediately got into the chimney which led out of the adjoining room whence the sounds proceeded, and was at once cognizant of what was going on. A young and silly goose, who had just come into a large fortune, had been decoyed by some dear friends into the hotel for the purpose of spending a pleasant evening. When he was half fuddled with Burgundy, dice and cards were

introduced, and with the assistance of a few kind associates, he was plucked to a terrible extent. All his ready money, consisting of bank notes to the amount of nine or ten thousand pounds, had been already secured, and as he had lost about twenty more—I mean in hundreds—his companions were now getting him to put his name to bills or bonds, or some other kind of devilish security—such as my father would have understood—for the amount. But with the dawn of day the silly coxcomb seemed to have grown sober, and he was gravely protesting that he had been cheated. His companions, who had swallowed large quantities of wine when their purpose was accomplished, and who were infinitely more drunk than gentlemen of their profession usually are, were denouncing vengeance against themselves from Hell and Satan, if all had not been as honourable and fair as it was possible that play could be.

“ Damme,” cried one, “ do you suspect our honour. May the devil,” &c.

“ By heaven,” cried another, “ I was never before so insulted as by our excellent friend here. Only that I love him as my own soul, I would wish the devil,” &c.

“ Nay,” cried a third, “ may the devil come and fetch us all if anything could be more strictly honourable than every game we played.”

At this moment a sudden thought seized me. I meant only a freak, but it ended differently. I suddenly popped down the chimney and into the room. Flinging a cloud of soot from my dress and face, I said—

“ Very well; here I am, come to fetch you with me to hell; so prepare.”

The scene that I now beheld was perfectly appalling. The drunken cowardly cheats, seeing me but indistinctly in the waning candle light, conscious of their guilt, and with nerves highly excited, rushed altogether into a distant corner, and huddled into a mass. One groaned out, “ O Lord Jesus forgive me;” another cried, “ By G— it is the devil himself;” a third fell down into a swoon; the others who were able, made for the door, and burst out of the chamber screaming with alarm. Seeing the coast clear, I went up to the table and the cheated sot. I coolly pocketed all the bank notes, and tearing into a thousand pieces the bills and promissory notes, which the deluded ninny had been asked to sign, I vanished

up the chimney as suddenly as I arrived. And it was well I lost no time, for some of the gang, having fortified themselves with brandy, immediately returned ; but the coast was clear—the devil was no longer visible, neither were their notes. I escaped without difficulty ; nor did I ever again return to my old master. By means of an endorsement on one of the notes, I was enabled to discover the wretched fool who had well nigh gambled himself into ruin. I called on him in a few days, and restored his lost property. I informed him of my absurd freak, and told him my suspicions that he had been robbed. He thanked me, and offered me a hundred pounds, which I refused. The next night I was at home.

How this came to pass was accomplished in the following wise. As I was leaving the young gentleman's house, a greengrocer who was in the habit of serving some of my father's servants in town, came straight up to me. He looked with great earnestness at me, and I saw that I was recognised. I ran off as fast as I could, but he pursued and collared me.

“ Hallo, young master,” he said, “ where are you going? You must come home with me.”

I was thunderstruck, and could not utter a word. He called a hackney coach, into which he thrust me almost before I knew where I was. I kicked and struggled and pushed, but I was brought home disgracefully in captivity, and again consigned to my old jail, where I lay for some weeks. I was then sent to Westminster School, of which I entertain any but pleasing recollections. What a shame it is that in childhood, when we might all be happy as sweeps or link boys, we should be consigned over to those pedantic old scoundrels, who make that period of our lives as wretched as any subsequent portion of it can ever be!

## CHAPTER X.

“ There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man’s lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him.”

How well do I remember my first dreams of love and beauty; with what divine sweetness and delight they revive within my withered heart. So have I seen the rose tree blooming out of the granite, and the golden hyacinth raise her head out of the broken fragments of the past. But they are nought but dreams—wild and half-forgotten dreams—glimpses of a Paradise that is gone for ever. I find myself—old hackneyed, hardened vagrant as I am—sometimes weeping

over them, weeping as if I were a child, or a weak woman—feeling as a boy once more, and wafted back into that summer sunshine, which is in the heart of all when they revert to childhood. For I was only a child, indeed, when these dreams began—alas ! that I cannot be a child again and feel as then. And thus it was that these emotions had their birth.

Among the pictures which my mother had brought with her from the East, was one that the moment I began to perceive and feel, moved me with a strange fascination. It was only a sketch, but oh ! how lovely was that sketch. It was a profile likeness of a young girl of twenty. The complexion was delicate and pure as the rainbow tint that is on an Indian shell ; only that it was softer, fairer, more exquisitely bloom-like. The eyes were dark and bright, the lashes long, and like a silken veil over those crystal fountains of thought. The hair fell in loose clouds of shining brown over the neck and bosom, and one of the hands held a bunch of flowers ; but these were indistinct, and had been but half touched by the artist. The eyebrows were delicately limned, and were a perfect study to contemplate. The mouth

was beautiful when you viewed it closely, but when you scanned the picture at a distance, there was a severe dignity about it that impressed you with a sacred awe of her who was pourtrayed, and effectually checked any feeling but that of respectful admiration. It was a face to look upon and love ; but it enshrined a spirit that you might also worship, nor deem that you dis- honoured Heaven by paying homage to one of its choicest works. No frivolity was there ; all was pure, holy, refined. The thoughtful brow, the marble stillness of the features, which yet were flesh and blood, and belonged to one who had a thorough woman's heart within her, and could die for him she loved ; the firm mouth, the liquid eyes that gave the face its sweetest, softest charm—never shall I forget them ; and though it is sixty years since first I saw that charming portrait, still it shines fair over my memory, and flowers in beauty out of the ashes of my soul.

Well ! it became my passion. I could not tear myself away from it. I was but six years old— indeed, I do not think I was quite six—but in feeling I was six-and-twenty. I stole away every

hour to look at it ; to gaze upon it as the Guebre gazes on the sun ; to worship it ; to take it into my heart of hearts as if it were some holy spirit whom I longed to enshrine within. I had heard of the Guardian Angel, who with heavenly love accompanies every human being, and guards him from temptation—this, one of the most beautiful of the Popish legends, is now rejected by the priests, and laughed at as a myth. It served them in the dark ages, and now is flung aside with scorn. Yet there were moments when I half believed it, and said to my heart. “ Even such as this is the Guardian Angel that watches over me.” And I have caught myself bending over my shoulder, or rushing in front of a looking-glass to see whether I could not by chance get a glimpse of that invisible one of the celestials who was my appointed guide and guardian on the earth. I will see if they are alike, I said ; but I never could catch the heavenly sprite. She eluded me —she would not be beheld. Yet I had no doubt in beauty she was the counterpart of that divine portrait on which I so loved to look. Morning, noon, and night I gazed upon it ; I could not tear myself away. I was a devotee. My mother saw

it, knew it, and scolded me ; but I did not care for this. I neglected the few elementary books that were placed before me ; I cared for nothing but my picture. Thus time passed until I was at Westminster school, and sick of its restraints and rods.

One day as I was sauntering listlessly through one of the parks, looking at the sky, and wondering what fantastic form the clouds would next assume, I heard a merry laugh, which made every nerve within me quiver. It went into my very soul, and seemed to meet its echo there. I turned round, and saw a young girl with a middle-aged man. He was short, sturdy, common place ; and evidently belonged to the lower classes, as we who are so sublimely raised upon Olympian heights above them, condescend to call the working members of society. I did not give him more than one glance ; all my gaze was concentrated on the young girl. She seemed in beauty like my picture ; only hers was of a more youthful type ; for she was not more, I think, than sixteen or seventeen—probably not quite so much. She was dressed simply, but simplicity accorded with her pure, innocent, and open face ; there was a

frank cheerful look about her, like a sunshiny day, that at once flashed gladness on the soul, and made you happy, you knew not why. She did not see me—she did not mark those dark and fiery eyes that gazed intensely on her—if she had, she would have burned beneath them. She continued her conversation and merry laugh, and passed on. A powerful spell moved me. I followed her; I never once lost sight of her all that day. I knew not whither they went, or what they did, or whether they sat or walked; I only saw one bright form, and that I followed mechanically. She entered a house, the door closed, and I was in darkness. Now for the first time I looked about me. I was in a strange unknown land. The houses were old and wretched; the locality exhibited all the symptoms of poverty. The very house into which the girl and her companion—instinct said, “He is her father”—had gone, seemed mean enough. I was bewildered—frightened—I began to wonder, for the first time, how I should get home. I was tired also; I saw an old woman hobbling along, and asked her what place this was? She looked at me with a drunken

fixed stare ; surveyed my fine clothes, as if she had a mind to strip me ; then seeing one or two persons approaching, she said, “ This is Blackwall, my pretty dear—what brings you so far from home ? ” I had no mind to answer her, but calling a coach, I was driven back to Westminster, and alighted just outside the school. When I got into our dormitory that night, I could think of nothing but this lovely girl. Now for the first time occurred to me the thought how like the picture she appeared. “ This is but an image,” I said, “ here is the living reality. Oh ! that I could gaze on her for ever.” I tossed and tumbled about ; sleep was banished from my eyes. In the morning I attempted to get my lessons ; I might as well have attempted to fly. The thing was impossible. I was flogged, but my dreams consoled me. The next day I tried, and again failed ; I could not remember a single word. I was flogged again. No matter, I did not feel it. I did not care for it. Again a third day came, and I was dunce as before. I was flogged, sorely flogged on this occasion. “ Why should I endure this,” I asked myself, “ when I am free and can

go away if I like?’ That night I disappeared. I scarcely know how I got to Blackwall, but I found myself there next day. I had some difficulty in discovering the house, for now all the shops were open, and when I had last been there, they were all closed. At length I found it. The father was behind the counter. He was a fishmonger. I had taken the precaution of coming away in some old clothes; I now boldly went in and said—

“Master, do you want a boy?”

He looked at me with some surprise; I suppose he saw I was not designed to be a fishmonger’s apprentice. He was silent for sometime, as if he thought I was but making game of him, and would go away when I had had my jest. I repeated, “Master, do you want a boy?”

“Get away, you young jackanapes,” said he, “and let me mind my business.”

“Master,” I answered, “this is business; if you want a boy, take me, I want a place, and I will serve you faithfully.”

He looked at me again.

“What can you do?” said he.

“Anything you ask me to do in the way of

your trade," I replied. "I will sweep your shop, sell your fish, and go your errands. I have no home, and I should like to stay with you."

The old man mused again—he was evidently surprised.

"Well," he said, "I'll try you. Who are you? Where do you come from?"

"My name is John Smith; my parents are dead, and I have just come up to London from the country to seek my fortune."

"What an abominable liar," says Mrs. Prude. "What a false young scoundrel," exclaims Mr. Grave, when he comes to this passage. Call me what you like, dear madam, and, sir, I deserve it all. You who never told a fib in your lives are well justified in flinging stones at me—and so—

"Poor boy," says the old man, "if what you say be true, I'm sorry for you. I suppose you're hungry; come in."

I went in; he led me to a back-parlour. I expected to see the radiant being there for whom I was undergoing this degradation. There was only an elderly female—she proved to be the fishmonger's wife. She was knitting with great

deliberation. The fishmonger introduced me in a few words. They gave me food, sympathised with me, and oh, bliss ! took me into their employ. I was to go errands, to hawk and cry fish—but they did not know that I was sometimes to catch a glimpse of her who was like the Angel of God to my heart. I lived with them for a year. Never man had more faithful servant.

Once or twice a-day, I saw the fair Elizabeth—such was her name. These stolen views of Heaven repaid me for all. Yet I was nothing to her. I was only an errand boy—crying fish and cleaning knives. Her thoughts were far away. Was she in love ? She sometimes gave me a letter to deliver, and the man to whom I delivered it was a footman, finely powdered, gilt, and dressed, who waited for it at a public-house near. With what trembling innocence she placed it in my hand. Her sweet eye seemed conscious of a something which showed that her heart was ill at ease. She offered no caution as to secrecy, but instinct told me that I must not mention it; and I feared that if I did, I should lose those momentary intercourses with her, so full of rapture to my soul. She must have known that I loved

her, I looked at her with such an earnest and enamoured gaze, during which I felt my face flush. I quivered in my every nerve, and trembled with a wild delight, until I almost fainted away before her. But she never gave me any token of sympathy. Poor girl ! Her whole heart was doubtless fixed upon one, and I was but an orphan fed by her father's bounty, and condemned to slavery all my life. There were moments when I thought I should fall before her, take her by the hand and confess all—my name, my rank, my prospects, declaring my passion with that wild eloquence which flowed from my lips, when I found myself alone, and beseeching her to wait a little longer and become wholly mine. But I was only fourteen. She was some years older, and was a woman in appearance and in feeling. The hazard was greater than I chose to risk. I said to myself, “ I shall be immediately expelled from her presence as an impostor, and shall never see her again. She will be lost to me for ever. Let me wait yet—wait and work ;” and so I did.

There was a fellow named Matthews—Henry Matthews—who had been introduced into our

house as an accountant by Dr. Young, the author of the “Night Thoughts.” The man was worthy of the master; they were birds of a feather. Young, was a sneaking, lying, dirty sycophant, who would any day have licked the mud off the boots of any noble lord or lady who could get him a place, or give him a purse. All sense of self-respect was extinct within him. This Matthews was an animal of the same class. He was not destitute of talent; but I detested him for his falsehood, hollowness, and selfish rascality. This miserable creature was brought up in a Jesuit school. He was a tall, awkward man, of scorbutic habit—the poisoned eruptions of disease—with a large hyena eye, a square forehead, a hideous mouth, hands, or rather talons, exactly like a vulture’s or a kite’s claws, and he had all the qualities of those fine birds; being secretive, foul, glutinous, sensual, cunning, and grasping. His spirit seemed to emit an odour or stench so dreadful that I could not sit in his company. If I were near, I felt as if in close proximity to some being, horribly wicked, and destitute of all moral perception. Yet he was smooth, pliant, smiling; and the general mob of mankind, who

are as blind as moles, would think him anything but the knave he was. Mr. Wortley Montagu highly regarded him, and used him for many purposes ; and under the tutelage of this individual it happened that I spent a good deal of time. What exact duty he filled in our house I can scarcely tell. He got up statistics, and was a sort of secretary and deputy liar when ugly questions had to be answered ; kept accounts for my father, and aired my lady's chemises and combed her lap-dogs.

I was on one of my usual errands for my master, and crying “fresh fish, fresh fish,” with all the force of my lungs, when a sailor came up to me, and saying, “Master, let me see your wares,” detained me for some time. I showed him my goods and chattels—plaice, flounders, lobsters, crabs, and soles, and had nearly concluded my bargain, when he suddenly said—

“Wait, wait, till I ask this old gentleman about them ;” and he pointed to two persons who stood close by, and whom in my eagerness to sell I had not observed before. I looked at them. In the first I at once recognised Matthews ; the second was our old domestic Jupiter, who had

carried me in his arms when I was a baby, and with whom I had always been a favourite. These two had been to Blackwall on some business for Mr. Montagu, and hearing me cry out as I have above mentioned, immediately knew my voice; they saw me pass and employed the sailor to detain me in conversation, that they might make themselves more certain. The instant I saw them, I guessed their object. I left my basket and fled home. But I had scarcely got housed, when they entered; the name of my master painted on the basket had led them to his house, and there was a discovery and a row. The honest fisherman was faultless. He had behaved with humanity; nay with great generosity. I told them so; I narrated all; but not the true cause of my flight. He gave me the best of characters, and I was again dragged home, leaving the whole family in tears for my loss, in which I also joined them with flowing eyes.

But though they brought me back to Westminster, and placed me under my former task-masters, with the most positive orders as to close custody, and strict vigilance, they forgot that I also had a will of my own, and had already

evinced a resolution to carry out that will when I pleased. I now indeed began to pride myself on my numerous flights, as Jack Sheppard did of the many jails he had escaped from, and I began to find a wild charm in this varied vagabond species of existence, such as I cannot describe. The main one, I suppose was, a sense of thorough independence ; there was also perhaps a hidden delight in feeling that I was walking the world under a species of mask, and that I could at any time change a position apparently most lowly for that of the heir of the richest man in London. I saw too, a most odd and diversified mode of life ; and learned the ways and manners of the poor, their thoughtless follies, their improvident luxury ; their existence wholly in the present, with utter heedlessness of the morrow, which are the three main sources of all their wants and miseries. The English character presents a greater mixture of eccentricity and humour than any other that I have ever examined ; and I seemed to myself a sort of spectator of a real drama of life, sometimes comic, sometimes deeply tragical, but on all occasions interesting, and played as it were on

the breathing stage of the actual world for my own particular amusement and instruction. As to Mr. Montagu, when his first rage at my disappearance had exploded, he cared very little to make any further enquiry whether I was dead or alive ; and he thenceforward behaved as I always knew instinctively he would, with the most sublime indifference as to what became of me. From Matthews I, of course, received several lessons in deceit, which though intended apparently for my benefit, operated still more in increasing the aversion in which I held that smooth tongued schemer. In vain he suggested to me that my true policy was to humour Mr. Montagu ; to attend regularly at church ; to give in to his ways and crotchets in all particulars ; and to be a dutiful and obedient son. “ Humbug, the old fool,” he said : “ humbug, as the grand winner of all things, and the great conqueror of men ? ” But I would *not* humbug. What is the good of doing so, if, when you have won all things you scorn yourself ? Matthews could not understand this. The glittering prospect of gold and power which he held forth before me as the reward and price of

my subservience, had no influence whatever on my mind. That there might be a payment for such degradation was one of the main reasons why I was always resolute in following out my own purposes. Had I been lured only by the moral beauty of filial submission, to a father who had at least no active vice, as against myself, but was merely the basest of mankind in grubbing and hoarding gold from the most filthy sources, I might possibly have sunk into the level of the other honourable Toms, and Jacks, and Freds, who went about the metropolis, heaping upon their absent father's heads all the scorn and contempt they could accumulate; while in the parental presence, and in their letters home, they were the most affectionate, dutiful, and obedient of sons; a little gay perhaps, but wanting in respect to their honoured sires—never, oh! never.

But this course I did not choose to take. My father and mother did not care for me, nor did I feel one atom of love for them. My mother in truth hated me virulently, and made no secret of that hate; but I almost fancy my father's silent scorn was even still more biting. Matthews

would not, or could not understand my notions. To him, the hope of a million of money would have been quite enough to make him devote a whole life to every species of infamy. In this view I do not say he was singular, for there are but few men who would not imitate him. But Nature made me one of these few, and all Jesuit counsels were wasted on me. On the whole I am not sorry that they were. I would rather be the wanderer I am, than Bute with all my father's money in his coffers ; and a transmigration after death, into the form of a rat, cockroach, a dog, fish, or something equally noisome, and detestable.

Three months longer at Westminster sickened me of it for life. I resolved to fly at the first opportunity, and I did so. My first visit was to my old master at Blackwall. But he was a changed man—changed and altered for the worse. The sturdy frame was bent, the once keen eye was dim ; the fire within the man had burned out, and he was but the cinders of a human being. A revolution of twenty years seemed to have done its work upon him. His hair was white, his voice tremulous, his step—once so

sturdy, so bold, so freeman like—was transformed into a slip-shod creep. When he saw me he burst into tears ; he could not speak, but led me in silence into the little room behind the shop, which had been once his parlour. I asked for his good woman. This question renewed his grief. I looked round, but saw her not. “ She is dead,” he muttered. “ And Miss Elizabeth ?” I asked.

“ Gone—gone,” said the old man, “ gone and left me desolate and heartbroken.”

I was stricken with horror. Could it be possible that both were dead—both in so short a period. My eyes I suppose questioned him, for my tongue was incapable of doing so. He shook his head ; his tears broke out afresh.

“ No,” he said, “ not dead ; worse—worse—worse.”

I now began to suspect the truth. My unlucky letter-carrying was beginning to rise up in judgment against me. I learned it at length from the old man.

After I left, she had grown melancholy and silent ; she was absent often from her meals ; she was not communicative as of old ; the frank smile vanished ; the sweet musical laugh was

unheard. One night she disappeared. She left a letter on the table saying she was gone to be married to a gentleman with whom she had long corresponded, and who loved her. In a little time she would return, and all would be well. She blessed her parents for all their love and kindness; she would be their most dutiful and affectionate daughter in her new state. In vain they made enquiry after her. No tidings could they learn. At length a letter came in a distracted hand writing—it was their daughter's. She had been deceived, betrayed, dishonoured. The person with whom she fled proved to be a married man. He was of high rank, a senator and privy councillor, and when the discovery was made he proposed to her to continue as his mistress, citing high and royal example for the iniquity. But this she spurned. She had now abandoned him, but dared not face her home. What she was to do, she knew not, but she craved forgiveness of God and them. They must forget that she had ever lived. To all her kindred she was dead for ever. Thus ran the wild epistle. The mother sickened and died; the old father was dying. But he wished once again to hear

that voice of melody, and listen to one silvery note of love. And his tears again fell thick and fast upon his pale cheek.

I was myself also in an agony of grief and rage. But I will not venture to describe it. This incident gave me a new horror of civilised life. Thus, I said, it is, the rich are ever preying on the poor ; the powerful are crushing the feeble. The coronet of my lord is glorified by the number of his victims ; the chariot of the great rolls over broken hearts. Let me fly for ever from these haunts of villainy. What have I seen in all my life hitherto but wickedness ? And what is worst of all, wickedness triumphant ! Why is this good man—for good and honest he was—made miserable in his old age, his household desolated and disgraced, his wife killed, his daughter torn from him, to gratify the momentary whim of some gilded coxcomb, who now probably moves in courts or senates, the observed of all observers ? Let me abandon such haunts for ever. Let me seek nature in the woods, the mountains, or on the ocean. Let me separate myself from those with whom vice is the daily business, and

dwell apart from human kind, or at all events, seek them where they are uncontaminated. Let me become a pirate on the glorious sea ; a brigand in the wild green forest ; an Ishmael among men ;—nay a very beggar on the wayside—a tramp under the splendid arch of heaven, with the winds and sunbeams for my friends ; rather than be one among this wealthy wicked rabblement. Now know I what that Roman Kaisar meant, when he wished that mankind had but one neck, that he might decapitate them all at a single stroke. It was not blood-thirstiness made him thus cry out, but that “fierce indignation,” against human vice, which ate up the fiery heart of Swift: and which must have appeared to this sated wearer of the purple in its most odious and terrible aspect—surrounded as he was every moment by all the subserviency, falsehood and meanness of an imperial court. But was it more degraded than our own, as I saw it? No, no ; a thousand times, no! With an aching heart I left the old man. I came back to London. By accident I found myself close by the Sussex waggon ; a great

lumbering affair, like a farmhouse on wheels, and drawn by four fat punches. It was going to Bredhemston ; but where Bredhemston was I neither knew nor cared. I only knew that I was about to abandon civilization and its rascalities. I easily bargained with the driver for a seat as far as Bredhemston, and lost no time in getting into my berth. Of my adventures in this wonderful machine I have nothing to relate. We rode for some days, stopping at queer inns with great fire places, and public houses at night. We took in and let out several odd characters. As we got deeper into Sussex, and near the sea coast, I heard a good deal of the gypsies who were encamped about the Downs of Brighthelmstone, for such I afterwards found was the original of that which our waggoner had so curiously abbreviated. And when I was at length shot out of this Noah's ark, I determined to seek my fortune among those wandering people, and if that failed, to scramble on in some way to Portsmouth, and go on board ship ; careless whither I was borne, so that I was wafted from home and kindred, and companions, and the debasing influence of

wealth, rank, state, and civilized society. I looked forward with considerable curiosity to the new drama of events which I thought was opening before me; and doubted not that I should achieve rare exploits among the people of that most poetical of all gypsies—glorious John Bunyan.

## CHAPTER XI.

“ And David said unto him, To whom belongeth thou, and whence art thou come? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt.”

IT was a lovely afternoon in rosy summer when I got to Portslade, a little hamlet just out of Brighthelmstone. At the side of a green lane I saw something like an encampment. A thin cloud of azure smoke rose up in waving column against a clump of elm trees; and a dog barked quick and sharp as my footstep beat against the short emerald sward. There were about a dozen tents in all, of various colours and sizes. A crowd of waggons and a troop of horses were scattered about in the adjacent open fields. As I advanced, a young girl came towards me; her eyes were jet black, with a fixed fiery star in the centre, which gazed upon you with a lurid light that seemed to petrify the very heart. She was

clothed in scarlet and black, bordered with Asiatic flowers, and was crowned with a vivid red head-dress, fringed with golden ornaments, set with blue stones; she wore a gold chain in triple folds around her neck, massive as a king's collar, but dark and tawny coloured, from long exposure to the air. Her lips were thick, but not coarse, such as I have since seen in the mighty Indo-Egyptian idols of the past; and the nose was hooked like that of the Memnon on the banks of the Nile. Many and many a time since have I beheld her type in Nubia, and in the mighty awful depths of the Himmalayas. Her tread was light and bounding, like that which characterises all the wandering tribe; she was close upon you like some wild dweller of the forest, almost as suddenly as she appeared, and ere you were aware. Seen thus, she gave me the notion of a leopardess, though at that time I had never seen one. I afterwards found I was not mistaken.

As I had determined, if possible, to dwell among these people, and make their tents my tents, their home my home, for the rest of my life, I had before carefully meditated in what

manner I should best make my entrance among them. The only valuable I possessed, in addition to my fine clothes, and one of the guineas which poor Steele had given me, and which I had never parted with during this long interval, was a gold watch, of curious antique workmanship, which my mother had brought from the East, and in some capricious mood, ere yet I had been witness of her shame, had hung around my neck, from which it had never parted since. On the back was chased the arms of the Montagus ; the eagle displayed. The border was quaintly painted, and had about a dozen oriental characters graven on it, which no one had been able to decypher ; and on which I myself set a strange value, as if it were some wondrous talisman on which my fate depended. I had often while at school, amused myself with my fellows by pretending to accomplish various puzzling tricks through the operation of this talisman ; and I had half persuaded many of them, that I was the only person living who understood and could explain this mystic tablet. The chain that hung to it was of lion's hair, twisted into a thick cable of enduring strength ; and there was a key, and two or three

seals of agate, or some other Indian stone, on which were also cut some strange devices of far off lands.

I now resolved to astonish the gypsy—it was a schoolboy trick, grave reader—and as she came close to me and before she spoke, I pulled out my watch, and putting it to my ear I suddenly cried out “Ziga zi.” The gypsy started at the strange, unusual sound. Whether it really conveyed any idea to her mind I know not; but I could see that she marked the watch and its graven border, and scanned me with a curious eye of fear or wonder. She called out in a shrill voice—and immediately an old hag, wrinkled, dwarf-like, black, but fierce-eyed as a panther, came out of one of the tents. Her hair was dark as jet, and she wore an ebon-coloured robe, girdled by a broad belt, on which I could plainly see, worked in gold thread, somewhat tarnished, three or four characters similar in formation to those on my watch and seals. Her step was slow, her glance fixed and full of surprise—for I still held my watch to my ear, and the seals glittering in the sun and dangling about, probably made manifest to both, that the bauble before them was also from the Lord of the Sun.

She stood gazing fixedly at me for, I think, three or four minutes, leaning all the while on a stout staff with a quaintly fashioned head. At length she spake, but in a language which I could not understand. I shook my head to her to intimate that I did not know what she meant—and I looked at my watch, as if reading in its page some deep revelations of the future. She mused again, and whispered to the younger one; at length she said,

“Come you here, little one, on business of Egypt?”

“Aye indeed,” said I, “mother, on business of Egypt do I come.”

There was something so weird, mysterious, and witch-like in all these proceedings, that I resolved on the instant, as if instinctively, to adapt myself to all they did and said, like an adept of their own; and this subsequently proved to be the most sagacious policy I could have devised; for my sudden apparition, as it afterwards proved, filled their wild brains with an idea that I was somehow mysteriously sent among them, and my fearlessness and cool manner confirmed them in the thought. Had they known from what a pair

of accomplished diplomatists I had descended, their surprise perhaps would not have been so great.

“And what business of Egypt came you upon?” asked the aged crone, regarding me with the same keen, and searching, and lightning-like glance, that her companion had before bestowed upon me.

“Behold,” said I, extending the watch before her, “it is written here;” and pointing to the seals, “here you, O wise queen, can doubtless read both.”

The hag took the watch out of my hand; her eyes sparkled as she held the golden toy; she peered closely into both it and the seals, but she could evidently make nothing of either; I could see, however, that she was favourably impressed with my credentials, and somehow began to regard me as one of themselves, though how, or wherefore sent, was a puzzle that did not seem likely to be solved. This was just what I desired. I knew that a secret was the very thing to serve me with the fair. Seeing their perplexity, I asked,

“Hast thou read what is herein written, O mother?”

She shook her head, as if admitting her inability to do so.

“Then,” said I, “I will do so,” and taking the watch again from her hand, I muttered some unintelligible jargon, to which they both listened with perplexed wonder; they were unable however to comprehend it.

It would have been much more wonderful still, if they could have done so, for it was a hash of Greek and Latin, mixed up at the moment, and which meant just nothing at all—something like our school incantation, *oxus, doxus, glorioxus, &c., &c.*

“And what, O little one of Egypt, means this message?” again asked the elder of the two women.

“This,” I replied; and in a deep solemn voice repeated, “*The heir of the Stars, the foster-child of the Queen Serpent, the beloved of the dark Goddess of the Woods, seeks a hospitable tent, and soft pillow.*”

They scanned me again for some moments with their glittering eyes. I bore their scrutiny without flinching. The crone again took the watch

out of my hand ; she breathed over it, and smelled at the lion-hair guard chain. The whole thing seemed to her to be—if I might judge by appearance—the most extraordinary incident in her life. Then coming towards me, she took me by the hand, and turned the palm up, minutely inspecting the lines and intersections ; occasionally also gazing with an inquisitive search into my eyes ; and flashing out of her own the clearest light, that seemed full of a divining spirit. At length she seemed satisfied. She led me into her tent, and seated me at her right hand ; she hung the watch around my neck, and stroked my hair, and head, and cheeks ; her hand was soft as down, though seventy winters had revolved since first it pressed the mother's nipple. She set before me choice food, and preserved fruits of rare delicacy ; she poured out of an earthen pitcher, water, cool, clear and bright as crystal ; and of so sweet and pure a flavour to the palate that it seemed to taste like ethereal wine.

As the evening gathered in, and the violet-coloured clouds folded over the distant hills, and the glittering stars, one by one, peered out of the transcendent arch of heaven, the men and women

of the tribe gradually came in, and recounted with many a wild sign and gesture the varied chances of the day. I found they were exiles, or wanderers from many lands; the gypsy of England, the Bohemian of France, the Gitano of Italy, the Zingari of Spain; and that their trades or callings were even more numerous than the countries from which they came. Some forged nails and horseshoes; some were farriers, tinkers, and braziers; others musicians, others basket-makers; all the women told fortunes, and exhibited with glee the silver fruits of their day's adventure. When they had supped, but not until then, the old woman who appeared to be a person in authority, presented me and my watch before the assembled group. In a few words she explained the mystery of my appearance, my words of introduction, my missive from some unknown power to their tents and households. She exhibited with seeming awe to some of the oldest men, the mystic watch and seals, and I could see that these made a powerful impression. After a long consultation, carried on more by signs than words, and when words were neces-

sary, in a language which I could not understand, it appeared to be finally agreed that I was to be received among their number ; and the men shook me by the hand in rotation, beginning with the oldest ; and the women kissed me, ending with the youngest. This latter portion of the feast pleased me most.

And now it was determined that I should be solemnly initiated among the brotherhood, and a day was fixed for the ceremony. Gitanos came from all parts of the country ; the soft and sunny downs were thick with tents. There was a ruined old chapel of the bygone Papal days, close by the green lane, and in view of the blue sea ; and though only the gray gable ends, and half a tower remained, still it furnished a sort of rude accommodation, well adapted for the sight that was to take place. On the twelfth day from my first visit to these strange people, the mystery began. My skin was darkly died all over with walnut juice, so that in appearance, at least, I was a perfect African. A new suit of clothes, half Oriental, half Spanish, was supplied by the quick fingers of the younger gypsies, who seemed to take a wild maternal glee in arraying me in

this new finery. When I was brought into the chapel I was amazed to see a large idol, three-headed, black, and cross-legged, but whether of stone, metal, or wood, I do not now remember. A chain of ivory, carved into the likeness of human skulls, surrounded the waist and neck of the idol ; and in its hand it held a bunch of flowers. But no prayer was offered up, no adoration was gone through ; it appeared to have been brought there merely to be present, as if nothing of so important a nature could be transacted in its absence, or without its knowledge or permission. I was led around the chapel twelve times ; at the last I stood before the idol, the bunch of flowers was taken out of its hand, and placed over my heart ; some strange mystical signs were then made about my head, chest, and back ; my eyes and mouth were kissed, and I was dubbed by a new name, which I always thenceforth bore—namely, Zala Mayna.

And after these things were done, they carried me far away, into the very heart of the Downs ; we got there when the moon and stars were in their full splendour of light. It was midnight ; and such a glorious midnight of blue skies, and

transparent silvery brightness. I have seen such often in the east, or in the Hesperian land, or over the golden sierras of Hispania, or in the Mexican steppes ; but seldom in our own clime of fogs, shop-keepers, and clouds. There was an immense tent erected, and blazing with light from brightly polished lamps ; the oil was perfumed, for the fragrance was rich and exquisite. There was no table, but the supper was served on the green carpet, in plates of China, painted with a brilliancy and fire of fancy such as I had never seen, and which was worthy of the halls of kings. It was probably two hundred years old. Had it been ransacked from some royal palace ? from Samarkand or Delhi ? or had it travelled further still by some unexplained method of pillage or contraband from the imperial gardens of Cathay ? Goblets of Venetian glass, bottles, and curiously shaped decanters, filled with Oriental wines, cool, sweet, and not intoxicating, were served round ; and when the repast was over, silver ewers, of the most quaint and ancient form—probably the work of four or five hundred years before—were brought in, filled with perfumed waters, in which we dipped our fingers. Then one of the most aged

gypsies rising up, commanded silence. All was still as death. He held in my hand the watch and seals, and looking on me steadily, spoke as follows:—

“Blessed are the true Calorè—the true Calorè, who are the Sons of the Gods. There is no other race or people, equally the favoured of the Powers, as the true Calorè of the east. From the Sun and Moon we came; the spheres of golden fields and silver mountains; there the trees have leaves of pure emerald; diamonds, amethysts, and sapphire are their priceless fruit. And every stream is pebbled with the finest gold, and every drop of dew is silver, and every blade of grass is finer than the Cashmere fleece. And these, indeed, once were ours, and ours alone—once, alas! in the days gone by, for we are the true Calorè, the blessed Sons of the Gods, and the wanderers from the Sun and Moon. But when the Mighty Powers stood asunder, and discussion rose, and there was discord in the Spheres and Cycles, then the true Calorè were in trouble; and they no longer dwelled in happiness; and the Sun cast them forth; and the Moon no longer embraced them in her silver hills; and we were

exiles, and deep was our sorrow, and sad the pain and misery of exile. Then came an Eagle unto the true Calorè, saying unto them, ‘O, Calorè, why do ye lament?’ And the Calorè said, ‘We lament because we are in darkness; and the Sun gives us not his golden light, nor does the Moon shed her silver beam over us.’ And the Eagle said, “It is fated—this is destiny; but it shall not be always so. For ye, the true Calorè, are the Sons of the Gods, and your powers are above those of all other existences.’ ”

And the old man ceased, and the assembled gypsies clapped their hands, and joy sparkled in their eyes, and they cried out—

“Good! good!”

Then the old man resumed—

“And when the Eagle spake these words, he said unto the King of the Calorè, ‘Take these wings and fly and seek another place, for the Sun and Moon will receive ye no longer.’ And the King of the Calorè took the wings, and he fled nine days; and at length he came unto a great land—a land of lofty mountains, and green plains, and mighty forests, and vast rivers, and lakes, beautiful as crystal. And the King of the Calorè

said ; ‘ This land is good ; behold I will bring my people unto this land.’ And he again took the Eagle’s wings, and he flew nine days, and he came back unto his own people, and he said, ‘ I have found a land, and a fair land ; and there are rich plains, and noble mountains, and far extending forests, and flowing rivers, and lakes bordered with trees and flowers, and there may the Calorè abide.’ And they were glad ; and they said, ‘ Be it so.’ And he flew, and the Calorè followed the King ; and they sang joyfully, nor did their hearts once fail them. And this was the burden of their song—‘ Happy are the true Calorè—the true Calorè, who are the Sons of the Gods ! ’ ”

And the gypsies clapped their hands, crying out, “ Good ! good ! ”

“ And when the Calorè came unto this new land, they were a great and happy people, and they begat sons and daughters, and they feasted merrily, and they sang and played sweet music, and they danced beneath the sun and moon, and abided in the green forest, and clothed themselves in gold and jewels, and lived from year to year,

as they had lived in the golden fields and silver mountains. And thus they passed ten thousand years, and there was no trouble known among the true Calorè. And when ten thousand years were passed and gone, a new sect sprang up among the true Calorè; but these, indeed, must have been the sons of devils, for they began to live according to new and strange customs, wholly different from those of the true Calorè—the sons and favourites of the Gods of Splendour; for they builded houses and hewed stones, and burned earth, and cut down trees, the happy everlasting homes of us, the true Calorè; but these, indeed, must have been the sons of devils—for they burdened the green and beautiful earth with their abominations. And they increased, and waxed proud and fierce, and they drove the true Calorè out of their much-loved forests, and hunted them like wild foxes, and killed them, and robbed them of their gold, and despoiled them of their daughters, and made them slaves and beasts of burden. And the true Calorè wept, and were in great sorrow, and knew not what to do.”

And the gypsies hung down their heads, and cried, “Ah, me! ah, me!”

“Then the King of the true Calorè said, ‘Oh, golden Eagle, where art thou? Come again unto the true Calorè, and counsel them what they shall do.’ And the Eagle came, and he said, ‘What seek ye?’ And they said, ‘We are wanderers, and were despoiled by these, the sons of devils; and we know not what to do.’ And the Eagle said, ‘Why will ye not live with them, and abide in houses, even as they abide?’ And the true Calorè said, ‘We will not hide our heads in shame, beneath the dark screen that veils us from the Sun, and Moon, and Stars; for the Sun and Moon were once our homes, and we love to look upon them in the day, and on the stars by night. Peradventure, if we dwell in covered places with the sons of devils, and keep not these glorious spheres ever before us, we shall forget, and be forgotten by them, and shall no more return unto our primal homes. Wherefore we have vowed a vow never to put a screen of wood, or stone, or tile between ourselves and these glorious organizations. And this vow we will never break—no not though earth and

heaven should clash together. But the sons of devils persecute and drive us out, and rob us of our woods and forests. Therefore is our cry made to thee.' Then the Eagle said, 'Follow me.' And he led them into a new and fruitful land, where there were other forests, and fair hills, and fertile rivers; and the true Calorè were again happy."

And the gypsies clapped their hands again, saying, "Good ! good !"

" And the true Calorè, the Sons of the Gods, dwelled in this new land for ten thousand years; and though it equalled not their recent country, still it was a fair dominion. And they passed their days in fields and forests, and their only roof-tree was the leafy bower of the living oak and elm and walnut, and the everlasting ceiling of the banyan, through whose blooming branches the sun glittered; and the emerald bright stars of heaven shone over them in the soft night; and their sons and daughters increased wonderfully, and their days were happiness and peace. And it came to pass that the sons of devils extended their dominion unto this fair land also, and they said unto the true Calorè; ' Live ye

in houses and under roof-trees even as we do, or ye shall not abide with us, neither shall ye any longer pollute this land.' But the true Calorè said, ' We are the Sons of the Gods ; we love to look upon the Sun and Stars ; we love to feel them shining, smiling, watching over us, and we will not bar them out with lattice of stone.' And the sons of devils said, ' Depart ye therefore ; this land is no more a land for ye.' And they drove out the true Calorè with fire and sword ; and they devastated their peaceful bands, and slew them wheresoever they found any, and bore away their wives and daughters into slavery, and feasted in their desolated homes."

And the gypsies hung down their heads, saying, " May their mothers be accursed for ever ; may their graves be defiled : may the faces of their fathers blacken in hell !"

" And the true Calorè called again unto the Eagle ; and the Eagle came at their call, and he said, ' What want ye now, O Sons of the Gods ?' And the true Calorè answering said. ' Behold we are again exiles ; the sons of devils have again despoiled us — nor is there any longer a resting place on this earth for the

true Calorè. Wherefore have we called aloud unto thee, O Golden Eagle, for thou hast rescued us from our tribulation.' And the Eagle said, ' In this land there is no longer a home ; but the true Calorè must cross the seas.' And the true Calorè cried out, ' O Golden Eagle, command us not to cross the seas.' But the Eagle said, ' It is fated—this is destiny. But this ye shall receive for recompense ; knowledge of the past, knowledge of the present, knowledge of the future. In the eyes, the face, the mouth, and hands ; in the form and the presence of the stranger and the friend ; in the tone of the voice, in the manner of the gait shall ye read him, as if all his heart were laid before ye bare, and the tablet of his spirit opened wide before your eyes. And this shall be the gift of the true Calorè, above all other dwellers of the earth ; and the sons of devils shall fear ye, and be your suitors, nay, your very slaves for these things, until the end of time.' "

And the gypsies clapped their hands, and sprang upon their feet, and shouted with great joy, " Good ! good ! Blessed be the Golden Eagle of Heaven ! "

" Then the true Calorè sailed over the seas,

and the Sun led them in the day, and the Moon and Stars guided them in the night, and the Eagle sailed before them over the blue waters, and they came into Europe and dwelled therein ; and they abided there ten thousand years, until the sons of devils again followed them, and took possession of their lands and leafy homes, and drove them out. Then they became wanderers, and were broken up into tribes, and some went here, and some went there, and they dwelled beneath tents in this cold clime, but excluded not the Moon or Stars, for these indeed gleamed still through their transparent roofs. And they exercised their knowledge with wisdom, and the sons of devils came to them, and gave them gold and silver in exchange for mystic lore ; and were their suitors and their slaves unto this end ; even as the Eagle foretold. Wherefore rejoice ye, O true Calorè, and be not dispirited ; for the promise of the Eagle hath now been fulfilled for thousands, and yet many thousands of years ; and with us the divine gift shall ever abide ; so that in the eyes and the face, and the mouth and hands of the stranger,

and in his voice, and in his walk ye shall read his present, past, and future unto the end of time.”

Then all the gypsies rose up again, and some clapped their hands, and others clashed silver cymbals, and they cried out, “Good! good! all this is good.”

Then the old man resumed—

“All this have I expounded, because one is now amongst us who hath brought a mystic message from the Eagle; and behold the Signet of the Eagle is on his watch and seals; and the Eagle hath sent him unto the true Calorè—the Sons and favourites of the Gods. And the Sent of the Eagle hath delivered this message unto the true Calorè; *‘The heir of the Stars, the foster-child of the Queen-Serpent, the beloved of the dark Goddess of the Woods, seeks a hospitable tent and soft pillow.’* These words he hath spoken, but these words are not the words which the Eagle himself hath written on the watch—though this lad in ignorance or forgetfulness of his true message hath said it. But the words upon the watch are sacred words—and are a talisman from

our most holy books. These I have decyphered, and thus do they proclaim—

‘ Who knows, and who shall declare  
Whence and why creation took place?  
He who is in the highest heaven of light  
Knows this—no other.’

Blessed is he who beareth these words among us, and glad shall be his welcome among the true Calorè; for he hath come no doubt on business of Egypt, though as yet we know it not. Wherefore it is for this we have inducted him into our holy tribe—wherefore it is for this we have paid him honour—for no other than one truly the favourite of the Gods could he be who beareth these words. And we have given unto him a new name—Zala-Mayna, or the Eagle-sent.

“ But thou, O Zala-Mayna, shalt henceforth be welcome among our people; and whithersoever thou goest, there shall be a tent open to receive thee. I see in thine eyes and brow many tokens of the future. Thou shalt wander among many lands and achieve many adventures; thou shalt seek repose, and shalt not find it ever. Thy life will be a dim perplexity, but thou shalt discover truth and abjure error. Thou shalt be hated and loved of many; thou shalt smite and slay thine

adversary, and be the sport of fierce whirlwinds ; but the Eternal shall still shine before thy spirit ; and thou shalt not mingle with the common herd ; nor shall the sons of devils have power over thee ; though many and great will be their arts of fascination. A great grief, and a dark sorrow shall steal over thee, and shall be the eclipse of thy life's sun ; it shall cling to thee, and fasten itself round about thee ; it shall abide by thee unto death ; it shall be the evil curse bestowed upon thee by those who gave thee birth ; but thou shalt not quail or perish beneath it. Happier shalt thou be in the desert, or on the mountain, alone with Him unto whom thy spirit rises, than if thou didst tread the halls of kings, and didst behold a thousand parasites in thy train. But thine ending shall be quick and sudden—yet shall thy name not perish, nor thy wrongs be unavenged."

Thus terminated this strange scene, enacted in the solitary heart of those silent Downs, when all the dwellers of the hamlet were buried in sleep or dream ; unconscious of the drama that was being played within so short a distance. The lights were now extinguished ; there was bustle

and hurry ; the dogs were called together ; the horses were gathered in ; the waggons were harnessed ; the visitors departed. The stars alone saw us and them—the silent, holy stars of heaven to which I lifted up my soul, and felt as if they were my kindred. So real, so profound, so sacred seemed the conviction that I was indeed Eagle-sent, upon the wild minds of these people, that I was in my own heart heartily ashamed of what I now felt for the first time was a species of imposture ; an abuse of the divine rights of hospitality, an unhallowed intrusion upon the privacy of an isolated race. But what was I to do ? Was I to confess all, and be driven with curses from out their circle ? Nay, was I quite sure that with these passionate Children of the Sun, my life itself would be safe one moment after I had avowed the cheat ? Self-preservation imperatively required that I should not follow this course. But again other thoughts succeeded, and I began perhaps to deceive myself, as most of us poor erring creatures are but too much inclined to do. Was it then *quite* certain that I was an impostor ? Was

it beyond all dispute clear that I was *not* divinely led among these people—conducted by some mysterious and superior influence? Was the possession of this watch, which seemed the talisman of my fate, a mere accident such as might have happened to anyone else? Was my exile from my father's home, my mother's hatred, my school boy suffering, my flight so auspiciously untracked to the present time, all mere accident; or were they not all rather links of a chain woven by destiny itself to lead me into that future life of change by land and sea, which this adventure seemed to offer? How could I tell? At all events, this was not the time, nor the most favourable opportunity for enquiring too nicely into the matter. I contented myself therefore with the present, secure at least in a home, and safety and protection among these strange dwellers of the Downs. I was given over to the especial care of one whom they called Manasam, and in his tent I was to abide thenceforth, until I was thoroughly indoctrinated in all the lore of the tribe. He was a young man, eminently handsome, and might have served for a model of Apollo. His

eyes were bright as running streams, that dance and glitter in the sun ; his tongue was sweet and musical. Well have the ancients called the voice the image of the soul, and well did the sage of old say to the silent man, “ Speak, that I may know thee ! ” Never have I been deceived in this infallible test of man and woman ; nor was I deceived in that of Manasam. A strange affinity seemed to spring up between us ; he led me to his tent, and shewed me my separate bed. I undressed myself, and with a parting glance at the golden lights of heaven, all splendid in the violet arch above me, threw myself upon my heathery couch, and soon was wrapped in sleep.

## CHAPTER XII.

“My Lord is wise according to the wisdom of an Angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.”

I WAS now comparatively happy. Existence under canvas was novel; it was a delightful contrast to that from which I had so recently escaped. Like all boys, I was an intense lover of the open air. Solitary confinement at a desk or lesson had become odious to me. I had been flogged so hard under Casey and Porter, and fagged so hard at Westminster torture house, that the transition to indolence in the open country was like emerging out of Purgatory into Paradise. I would have said the flames of hell; only that a high authority in the Protestant church, who might have written the thirty-nine articles, has laid it down that, “out of hell there is no redemption.” I had made a certain pro-

gress under these classic savages. If I was flogged, and kicked, and trampled on, I had at all events the pleasure of not having suffered for nothing. I was master of Latin and French ; I knew Greek pretty well ; I had a sort of smattering of Italian. I had a general knowledge of history and literature ; not deep, but sufficient for all ordinary purposes. I had besides, what was better than all, a love of books ; and though I panted for a life of adventure, I was not insensible to the exquisite enjoyment which flows from the acquisition of new truths, new information, new acquirements in the arts or sciences. May I confess that I had even scribbled poetry ; but that is one of my accomplishments of which I do not intend to present my reader with a single specimen in this work. I believe I am the only rhymer that ever lived who had the modesty or decency to practise so much self denial.

Oh ! how I revelled in this new scene. I was drunken with delight. There were no bounds or limits to my joy. I sent my soul loose upon the free winds of heaven, that swept across the Downs redolent of the sea, the violet and wild thyme ;

the dewy breath of fragrant fields, the balm of an ethereal unknown beauty. I jumped, I skipped about, I was never tired of leaping over hedge, or fence. I sang, I shouted aloud ; I no longer envied the birds, for my heart was as joyous as the happiest songster of them all. The earliest beam of sunshine found me at my tent door, ready dressed ; almost before a dog awoke I was out upon the hills, crossing over the valleys, vaulting over brush and briar, and gorse, giving loose to the gushing ecstacy of my enfranchised spirit. A cold blooded spectator who had seen me, must have thought me mad, and in truth I was mad with the new feeling of freedom. I ran down the hares which I saw gliding through the thick fern and underwood. I rushed into the open sea, and breasted the green billows that dashed in living emerald upon the sounding beach, and seemed to speak the words of one Eternal. I stood and filled my lungs with the sweet breezes ; I opened my hand and sought to grasp it, and make it all mine own. The glorious sunshine filled me with a divine feeling. I was like an immortal God, imbued with the nectar and ambrosia of the heavens. We did not al-

ways confine ourselves to one place, but wandered away far and far, making this lonely silent slade our head quarters, to which we generally returned after scouring all the sea coast country; sleeping in rich corn fields, or on the warm beach when the summer sun gleamed over us with Italian glow and brilliancy; now on the Bexhill down, and Hastings, and chivalric Battle; now pursuing our course westward, and wandering like Bedowees over the South Downs, to Arundel and Chichester, and Salisbury Plain, where amid our father's temples, Stonehenge and Amesbury, we camped, and heard traditional tales of the enchanted Past—ere yet a Druid dwelt in Britain; ere yet a Hebrew emerged from Oude. And mark how grandly still do they survive—these Boodhist fanes of vast gigantic architecture. They seem and are, the works of a colossal race, before whom our puny modern men are but as elves. For what are all the palaces and crumbling churches of the Pagan; what are the marble fragments of Greece or Rome, or Gaul, when compared with the stupendous reliques of our great forefathers? They are

but children's toys—they are but doll's houses—utterly mean and miserable. The Parthenon—the Pantheon, even the great Colosseum itself—oh, name them not ; they are but poor, contemptible, and pigmy dust holes, if contrasted with these sublime memorials. These defy Time itself ; they are more ancient than the Pyramids, and will outlive them. They give a grander notion of the men who reared them by arts unknown to Euclid or Newton, than all the epic strains of Hellas or Hesperia.

My companion, guide, or tutor, whichever he might be called, sympathised with my new-born rapture, and gave me golden glimpses of the Past. He repressed me not in the least degree ; but himself, when he was not occupied in other pursuits, shared with me in all my sports, with the wild and savage freedom of a boy. While others poured their ancient lore into my heart, *he* taught me a variety of arts—to snare the rabbit, or pheasant ; to steal upon the partridge in her nest ; to surprise the nimble hare, and catch the silver tenants of the streams. Under his instruction I became a first-rate marksman with the arrow, the pistol, or the sling ; I could hit a

cherry with a stone from the last at a distance of a hundred yards. I had before some skill in swimming, but he instructed me in a variety of tricks, so that I could manage myself almost as skilfully as a fish in the water; nor did any feat seem too difficult for me to accomplish. He made me also a master of fence; he showed me how to wrestle and box; in a word I became an adept in all athletic sports. Two years thus pleasantly passed, and I was now seventeen. I was well-grown, tall, active, bold, quick, and daring. I feared no man; I blenched at no danger; and I had already distinguished myself by a variety of encounters with the myrmidons of the law, in which we usually came off victorious. I had become likewise a curious and keen observer of nature, and of the habits of the birds, the beasts, even the insects of the fields. I saw that they also were like human beings, with passions, feelings, emotions, vices, and virtues. I saw the strong oppress the weak; I saw the powerful destroy the feeble. Alas! when I went into the great world, I beheld the same; and could find no difference between the policy of the

scorpions and the rats, and that of men and women ; except that the latter were more refined and cruel in their love of power, or their lust of evil. I remember an incident which happened about this period, and which gave me a lesson, not unuseful afterwards to me in my varied career.

Two swallows began to build a nest under a projecting stone of one of the old gable ends of the ruin that stood adjacent to our encampment. Every day the work advanced. At length it was complete ; all that feathers, wool, and fine grass could do to make the tenement comfortable and compact had been supplied. While this labour was proceeding, two sparrows perched on a corn-rick close by, watched the swallows with eager, anxious eyes. When all was finished the swallows disappeared into a garden some way off, and the sparrows quietly took possession of the nest. Conscious, however, of their guilt, they never dared to quit it together ; but when one was absent gathering food, the other kept watch within, and with beak protruded like a soldier's pike, seemed ready to do battle with all the world, in defence of its ill-gotten citadel. The

Duke of Austria could not be more alert in guarding one of his felonious acquisitions. Our late King William did not more vigilantly secure the crown which “he received, but did not steal.”

At length the swallows re-appeared. They came as they supposed to a warm cottage ready prepared for their expected brood. But great was their dismay at finding the felons in possession. The male bird flew at the nest and attempted to expel the robber; but the stronger-beaked knave repelled him easily, and he retreated to his bride, bleeding and confused. A hasty and anxious discussion took place between them; they flew off, and all seemed tranquil.

And now a quick, sharp twitter from the triumphant sparrow recalled his mate; a consultation took place; sudden measures and precautions seemed requisite. They both flew off for a short period, and returned, laden with food. The garrison having been thus supplied, they both put themselves on their defence, and with javelins extended, made rather a formidable appearance. Their two sharp pikes stretched out beyond the nest, seemed to oppose an impreg-

nable barrier. I trembled for the luckless swallows who had thus fallen victims to these king-like spoliators. But soon the scene was altered. A shrill cry was heard in the air; I looked up and saw about thirty or forty swallows flying rapidly to the spot. I had no difficulty in recognising as their leaders the two outraged exiles, who like the sons of *Æneas* conducted this avenging army to this second Troy. They planted themselves on the corn rick and surveyed the enemy. There was a coolness and intrepidity about their appearance that gave me great hope that poetical justice was about to be done, and that the ravishers must share the fate of their prototype, Paris. Nor was I deceived. The sparrows, indeed, remained watchful; their eyes were bold and fierce, as became a besieged party. They did not, of course, venture on a sally; but they seemed determined to die in their stronghold. And their determination was fulfilled, but in a manner on which they had scarcely reckoned. Suddenly about a dozen swallows, each laden with a pellet of mud, flew against the nest and discharged it with unerring aim. They then retreated, and made way for a fresh party, who renewed the attack; these in

turn gave place to a third, who likewise fired their shot. The first battalion now returned with a fresh supply of mud, which they pierced into the very eyes of the besieged, blinding and confusing them ; and the attack thus continued until the luckless sparrows were completely embedded in the soft compact, and stifled to death. All their struggles to escape with wing and beak were ineffectual. A reserve corps of swallows kept watch just over the nest, and while the others were absent, effectually plastered in the mud over the sallyport, so that flight was impossible, and the ravishers were bricked up alive. And now, how great and glorious was their triumph. As flocks of winged cranes, or long-necked swans in Asian meadows, by the fair flowing streams of Cayster, fly here and there, exulting in their wings, and settling down with noise and glee triumphant, so raised their pæans, the victorious band of swallows ; as mighty eagles —but let me drop the Homeric strain, and simply say that, in a few short hours, by the united labours of all, a new nest was constructed just over that which had been blocked up, and the re-

instituted birds were next day in quiet and contented possession.

Among the dwellers of our tents was an aged Indian who, I think must have been at least a hundred years old ; yet he was not bent, nor bald, nor white haired. His eye retained its fire ; his step was firm, but slow ; his hand shook not, nor did his head wag. He went by the name of Akiba. He had travelled over nearly all the earth ; he had sojourned among the Boodhist talapoins, and the Brahmin priests ; he had visited the sacred temples of the Lama ; and had penetrated the enigmas of the holy city of Benares, and the more ancient fane of Samarkand. He had been initiated into the profound philosophy of the sages of Mecca, and the hidden rites of the sect of Lao-Tseu. He had searched the mystic treasures of the Vatican—all as yet in manuscript, and carefully hidden away from profane eyes ; unrevealed to the world, and never to be revealed ; consulted, like the Sibylline books, by the highest order of the priests alone, and by them sought only on the most difficult occasions and emergencies. There the

wealth of human wisdom and experience is hoarded up ; the secret engines that moved empires ; the dark intrigues that to mankind appeared so specious ; the hidden causes of ruins and revolutions are laid bare ; and no complication of circumstances can arise too difficult to be solved by those profound oracles of thought. This aged man became my Gooroo, or spiritual teacher. He showed me the insignificance of that knowledge which is to be derived from what we call the classical writers of Greece or Italy—the Platos, Ciceros, and other dotards who *knew* nothing ; the mad, fantastic, and degrading nonsense of their mythology—originally sublime and heaven-sent, but transformed by the accursed tribe of sophists and poets into a medley—so trifling and contemptible, that only children could be amused by it, while all men of sense must laugh it to scorn. He demonstrated that the Greeks, whom we in Europe absurdly venerate as the patriarchs of all philosophy, were despicable dreamers, without even the merit of originality in their shallow speculations ; all of which were borrowed from an older and a greater

people; but so travestied in the copy, that what was primarily so sublime, became, in their hands, utterly ridiculous. He enumerated their subtle distinctions and puerile definitions of God, the Soul, the Kosmos, and Eternity; and distinguished between that exalted wisdom which consists in ideas as opposed to that which is made up only of words. The Greeks were, in fact, always babblers. Their taste in art was fine and pure, though delicate and small; but they were a nation of coxcombs, without any real or solid grandeur. To one who has *really* mastered Indian lore, Plato is the vainest prater of the Schools. The Romans were too much immersed in wars and politics, and the extension of their sway, to devote any lengthened period to the study of philosophy or of true religion. They were, like ourselves, a practical, money-getting race. Those of them who *did* think, drew from Greek fountains; which, originally shallow, would, of course, offer nothing greatly worthy of acceptance. Cicero was a pedant, who knew scarcely anything of the subjects on which he professed to write. His *Nature of the Gods* reads like a burlesque. Seneca was a dabbler or a driveller—a dreary

copyist of other men; Lucretius versified the pamphlets of Epicurus.

From the East all true science came; in the East only was it to be found, Thales and Pythagoras knew this, for they travelled thither and explored. The knowledge which they brought back they developed among their fellows; but the Grecian intellect, like that of Gaul, was too puny to comprehend its simple grandeur. It became diluted, weakened and effeminated, so that only a small remnant of true Orientalism remained; but it was that remnant which gave vitality to their speculations. True science was, indeed, hoarded among the Wise, as a secret which ought not to be expounded to the common herd; and it may at least be said in defence of both Thales and his disciples, that they each had followers whom they initiated into the higher branches of the highest knowledge. But this policy defeated itself in the end. The great Monarchs of Wisdom, who committed to mere memory the vast treasures which they had acquired, the mighty conquests in the realms of thought which they had gained, trusted all to a most frail vehicle; and hence it came to pass that

in the course of time, a great deal was forgotten, and, consequently, lost for ever. To this may be attributed the present extension of Ignorance, and the vast twilight in which mortals wander. Had the Wise from the beginning, instead of confiding to each other, or to undecypherable tablets, their vast researches and great discoveries, committed them to writing, and published them to all the earth, the world would be ten thousand years in advance of what it is. There would be but One Religion and One System of Philosophy known among mankind; wars—the dice of hell—would cease, and confraternity universally prevail. But they kept their knowledge to a few, and hence the present wreck of all things.

Thus the old man taught me. We began at the rudiments of philosophy; we extended our inquiries into the most august speculations. He showed me how the earth of man was formed in the beginning; how it, and all the planets of this solar sphere were originally thrown off, like bubbles from the sun. These bubbles condensing, became vast globes of water; a few living seeds germinated; the result gradually produced solid matter; this solid substance sank, and was at-

tracted into one centre from all the vast circumference of waters. Hence deposits of mud, which grew into sand ; from sand to stone, from stone to all that we behold. God sent forth Vital Essences, which we call Spirits. He commanded them to animate existence, and gave them power to develop themselves as they thought proper. This, in the lower creatures, man calls instinct ; but it is by this instinct that man himself is formed. God says to a living spirit, “ Go forth, appear in any shape that pleases thee.” The spirit assumes that shape which is in harmony with its desires. If the spirit be inclined to evil, it assumes an evil shape, like that of a wolf, or tiger, or rat, with propensities cruel and cunning ? if it be inclined to good, it assumes a noble development, such as the spirit of Pythagoras or Socrates assumed. God did not make Plato and Thersites. He was not, could not, and would not be so unjust. Each made himself ; exactly as an insect makes its wonder-causing cells, which all the art of man could not imitate.

I asked him how it came to pass that spirits should have these propensities to good or evil, if God did not make them so inclined ? And I

argued that there could be no difference in the Creator making a man to be a Plato or Thersites, and making the spirit which so developed itself in Plato or Thersites, to have a propensity for the good or the evil which afterwards existed in these men? He said God did not make Plato or Thersites; neither did He cause the spirits which assumed these forms to have a propensity, the one for a noble, the other for an ignoble development. God made all spirits equal in the beginning of creation, but He left them free to do as they thought fit. Hence arose a difference at once between them; for free will, must ever produce variety of desire, and this variety of desire will develope itself in ten hundred thousand different ways. Remember, we are speaking of millions and millions of years that have gone by, since first our actual spirits were emanated from God; during which every spirit which is now on earth—for all living creatures are only spirits veiled in flesh, or body of some sort—must have played innumerable parts, and passed through uncounted stages of existence. Some men now living, have been archangels, and might have ever continued so, but the spirit is ever changing;

confine it in one place, restrain its ever-growing desire for novelty, and it immediately becomes unhappy. God would not so restrain it; the consequence of which was, it sought some other form of being, and left its archangelic manifestation. Thus a spirit that desires to develope itself in a tree, or a rose, or a bird, three exquisite bodies, capable of great enjoyment, is permitted to do so; and this was what the Greeks meant when they filled the forests with Dryads, and gave to each particular tree a living nymph, whose existence terminated with the tree itself. If these things were not animated by an immortal essence of spirit, they could not survive a year. Cut down a tree; its life is gone, its spirit is departed, it decays and rots, and is no more. So it is with all things. Yet men see this, and deny a spirit-life to these substances, because they say they are devoid of reason, instinct, or intelligence. How know they that? Who would not rather be a tree or rose than one of the great herd of humankind who toil and drudge, and have no thought higher than that of animal existence, and the support of the gross body? In the eyes of a Supreme Being, is not

the life of the tree more beautiful in all respects ? It is innocent, pure, and sacred. But what is the life of such a man as I have named ? And what is his intelligence ? and who from heaven told him that the tree has not great and noble aspirations ; and that when it lifts its head beneath the sun and stars it does not see God, in and through them, and does not feel His being in its every fibre ?

The reader may judge how all this entered into my soul—soured and saddened as it had been by the sensualisms and abominations which I had seen around me !

“ You assume then,” said I, “ that the soul pre-exists ; that it was an immortal essence before it animated the body ? ”

“ I assume nothing,” he answered, “ I merely say what must be the fact. I do not assume that the sun shines. I see it, I feel it, I know it. In the same way I know that my father and mother did not make my soul. God made it. But when ? Why millions of years ago. Then He made it, and it was worthy of His hands ; then it was a great, a splendid, a divine thing, as all the works immediately proceeding from God are. Taunt

not Him with creating such frail, miserable, and paltry things as human souls now be. It is they themselves, who, sinking from their primal majesty, have degenerated into their present lowliness. But mankind will not believe this. Their wretched self-love will not be satisfied with anything but an immediate creation from the hand of the Supreme. Thus they are enabled to father on Him, the Pure and Just, all their shortcomings, sins, and imperfections. God made me so, says the thief and drunkard ; I can't help it ; I did not make myself. Miscreant ! thou liest. Thou didst make thyself. When God made thee, He formed thee all pure ; but when abandoning Him, thou gavest thyself up to thine own will, then began that change in thee, which finally flowers forth in robbery and intemperance. But man, you will say, is unconscious of this pre-existence. It is not possible but that if he lived in other stages of being he must have some memory of them. This is not a sound argument. All memory is seated in the brain ; destroy the brain, and though the man survives he loses all recollection of the past. The greatest philosopher of the day becomes insane ; his brain

softens ; his memory is past and gone. Tell him that he existed twenty years ago, and he will betray no recollection of the fact. Does this prove he did not exist? You yourself, who now hear me, where were you this day ten years? What were your thoughts, your words, your actions? You cannot tell. Does this prove you did not exist? Yet your brain is the same now as then, and I am assuming that your memory is as sound as that of ordinary men. If then the brain, and the brain alone be the seat of memory, how can your spirit possibly recollect what happened in some prior stage, when it is separated from the brain, where all traces of that existence would be treasured up? I have shewn you that even with your present brain you cannot recollect what took place ten or fifteen years since. How then is it possible that you could remember what took place ten thousand years since, unless you had the same brain now as you had then ; or even if you had the same brain now as then, which of course it would be impossible you could have.

“ Moreover, is it beyond all cavil established that we have no memory of the past? What is imagination—that power of building splendid

castles in the air ; of soaring into new regions and spheres ; of clothing incidents with a golden brilliancy that gives to them the hues of fairy land ? How know you that this enchanting fancy is not a dim recollection of other and more lovely spheres ? You hear sweet music ; you are fascinated ; the tears roll from your eyes ; your heart melts away in heavenly feeling. How know you that this also is not memory awakened by the song of happier days and times ? Can the concurrence of a few notes alone produce so powerful an effect as that which I have described ? I once travelled with a Dutchman through the Vale of Cashmere ; at the close of a long day's march, we rested in a beautiful plain, rich with silver rills, and flowers, and lovely trees, and sleeping as it were under a distant mountain, with varied tints of azure, pink, and violet. ' Good God ! ' said the Dutchman, ' I have seen all this before. How well I recollect it ! Every foot of ground is familiar to me,' and he mentioned several remarkable beauties of the place, which had not then disclosed themselves, but which we subsequently discovered. Was not this memory ? What else could it be. This dull

fool had never been out of Europe before ; or left his stagnant pool of mud and mammon ; had never before trodden that bewitching valley. Yet he knew every feature of this identical spot as well as any native.”

These doctrines opened to my mind an entirely new view of Providence, and the Divine Laws, and proved incontrovertibly the necessity of human responsibility for sin. It is clear beyond all dispute, that if God made my soul as it is at present, He, not I, it is, who should be adjudged responsible for all I do. I am no free agent, for how can I go against that inclination which God himself has given me? But this in fact is blasphemy against His goodness. To preach that God makes men predisposed to evil, and damns them because they commit evil, is to make him a demon, not a Divine Principle. Yet how many millions of people there are who honestly, but unthinkingly, hold this atheistical notion ; and never once meditate on the awful consequence to which it leads. If, therefore, God did not make me as I am, it follows that I made myself so ; and as a natural consequence I must pay the penalty of my own misdoings. This at once

vindicates the ways of God to man. Milton sought, or fancied that he sought, to do this ; but *his* notions of God were altogether mean, despicable, and grovelling ; and the Almighty Ruler of the Heavens appears in his pages as a sort of creature with all the errors of a man, and none of the sublime majesty of a God. The devil is his true hero ; and while he represents him as something above spirit, he makes God infinitely below it.

Then the old man taught me the true age of the earth, or rather, of man's existence on the earth ; which he said had been considerably lessened from its real period, for the purpose of propping up certain systems. He detailed the wonderful discoveries which the old astronomers had made, and which furnished conclusive proof that science at an early period had made gigantic progress, and that the true solar system, which we—vain puppets—suppose to have been a recent discovery, was perfectly well known to the most ancient men. In proof of this he mentioned the Cycle of the Naros, which was known thousands of years before what are called the postdiluvian ages. This cycle consists of 31 periods of 19, and

one of 11 years, and is the most perfect of the astronomical cycles. It consists of 600 years of 7,200 solar months, or  $219,146\frac{1}{2}$  days; and this same number of  $219,146\frac{1}{2}$  gives years consisting each of 365 days, 5 hours, 51 minutes and 36 seconds, which differs less than 3 minutes from what its length is observed to be at this day. Supposing this cycle were correct to a second, if on the 1st of January at noon, a new moon took place, it would take place again in exactly 600 years, at the same moment of the day, and under all the circumstances. This is the most perfect cycle ever known; and how many hundreds of years must it not have taken before the first astronomers could have observed and recorded the heavenly movements so as to be able to note the time that made it up.

Next he showed me the reasonableness of the Indian Metempsychosis, which is erroneously called the transmigration of souls. Souls do not change their bodies on this earth. If a beggar dies to-morrow, he is not found next day animating a dog. This is the vulgar notion, which those who get their bread by error desire to propagate. But the true Metempsychosis is this. A man has

passed his whole life like Timûr or Aureng-Zebe, in shedding blood ; in cruel savage thoughts ; in devising cunning schemes and plots. In what condition does his soul present itself before God when he dies ? It bears upon it all the marks of those hideous vices. As cruelty and tyrannic power give a man's appearance, his eyes, mouth, and look, all the dread tokens of his savage nature, so also do they imprint themselves upon his soul ; so that God when He beholds it, immediately knows its nature. He casts it forth from Him ; for it cannot enter into the spheres of Purity. It wanders away in darkness ; light is hateful to its black and gloomy nature. Here it gradually suffers until its period is expired ; when it is again permitted to assume a corporeal development in accordance with its nature and propensities. This would be probably that of a hyena, or a wild cat, or a tiger, if its intellect was large ; of a weasel or a rat if its intellect was small and weak. And this truth is shadowed forth in the Hebrew Scriptures by the Story of Nebuchadnezzar, who worshipped the Bull Idol, and was changed into a wild beast of the same order.

Thus did we discourse—thus did he teach me.

We traced man from his first appearance on the earth, down gradually to his present state ; we saw the various forms of existence through which successive races passed ; hunting, nomadic, war-like, agricultural, commercial. The scientific next remains. What it will develope mankind into is to be seen—but it is as yet a great way distant. We traced the various forms of religion, and identified those general features of a sublime original which all creeds possess in common. The various systems of philosophy we next examined, and found that nearly all were hollow and fantastical. The old man felt for me a paternal instinct. I suppose he was proud of the progress I made ; he was evidently gratified with the devotion which I displayed towards him, and the unmistakeable zeal with which I executed his slightest wish. Those were pleasant days ! How different from the gin-horse curriculum of the schools. Nature was our school-room ; the stars our monitors. We wandered by the mighty sea ; and in the majesty of the splendour around, before, and over us, more fully learned to appreciate the mystery that is in all things.

O Nature ! O thou Supreme Heaven ! How I

thank thee that my soul had nerve enough to fly from man and mammon. What might I not have been had I remained for ever the serf of civilization, and all its accursed crimes? I might have been like Walpole, Pelham, or Bute, Ministers of England, surrounded by the wickedest of the human race; obliged by force of circumstances to lie and fawn and flatter: to cringe to him who had six votes: to be the minion of the man who commanded twelve. I might have been forced to lie to every fool I met: to bow down to the most detestable of creatures, because they could command the ear of the many: to the most loathsome of women, because they could dispose of the passions of the King. I might have been tempted to make the most false and evil hypocrite a bishop, because he had votes and influence; and to have placed upon the bench, as administrators of law, men whose whole lives were meanness, falsehood, villainy, and chicanery. And all these crimes for what? A few thousands of money; a few years of patronage to fellows whom I loathed: a few years of worship by creatures whom I scorned: a

brief period of homage as false as the empty soap bubble. Many and many a day have I wanted bread, and many a night have I asked myself where I should lie down, but never once have I regretted that I was not heir to my father's millions, or envied the lord and master of Houghton.

## CHAPTER XIII.

“ And I saw the Beast and the Kings of the Earth, and their armies gathered together to make war — and the Beast was taken, and the remnant were slain with the sword.”

ONE summer evening, after one of our disquisitions on these subjects, Manasam suggested to me that I should ask Akiba to narrate his history for us. The old man had a parental—alas ! what was I going to say ?—I mean a truly patriarchal feeling for me, and he indulged me as a spoiled child. Indeed, I do not remember that he ever refused me a reasonable request. I was myself not a little inquisitive about what must at all events have been a varied experience. I asked him to oblige me; the old man paused for a few moments, and entering his tent, returned with a small parcel; he then resumed his

seat beneath a branching tree, and began as follows :—

“ You ask me for a narrative of my life, and you shall have it—briefly, for I am old, and my lamp is nearly quenched ; the river of my days is exhausted. My earliest recollections are of tents and plains. I was born in the desert ; I am a child of the mountain and the forest ; the rapid stream and the tempest-footed steed were my first companions. My father was a robber—so, indeed, were all our tribe ; Belochees—whose boy dreams are tinged with blood and pillage, and terrible adventure. Strange that I, who drew my primal breath far away in the hills of the Orient, under a hot sun and fiery heaven, and in the parched and beam-reflecting desert, should sink into the earth in this cold English land, and beneath its varying skies of cloud, mist, and azure ; with no kindred hand to smooth my pillow, or draw the curtains of my tent when the wind blows cold and raw ; and in its melancholy wail I seem to hear the spirits of my sires calling to their last descendant.

“ We led a wild life, and many a village owned our sway. Our swords were sceptres ;

where they waved we were as kings. The flash of our turbans was like the coming of lightning ; when they glittered it was death. Often were we hunted over the plains by omrahs fierce and bloody as ourselves—the legalised banditti of the land ; but our fleet Khorassan steeds bore us safely from their fangs, and we avenged ourselves in smoking huts, and rifled hareems. Had we been ten thousand strong we might have founded a dynasty, and been kings by all the laws that regulate and delude mankind, but we were never more than a few hundreds ; and so we were marauders and public enemies, against whom every man's dagger was uplifted, and those lies called laws were put in force.

“ We were only conquerors on a small scale, and we had not killed or robbed enough to take our place in histories, though we were celebrated by many a bard.

“ It was a wild life, and yet a glorious happy one ! We were here to-day, and sixty miles away to-morrow. We spared the very poor, but had no mercy on the rich, who lorded it over slaves ; and though they usually sprang from nothing, were far more proud and cruel than the

hereditary nobles of the kingdom. In one night we often captured as many as sixty camels, and drove them over the plain in one long file. Oh! how we scorned the mean-eyed dwellers in cities, whose sneaking walk and fawning looks, and wincing tones of sham humility were so widely different from ours; for even the least of us when fettered, wore the independent air of a prince; and even in his dungeon flashed around the splendid fire of freedom. With our swords, shields, and matchlocks, we thought ourselves a match for any equal number of men in the world; and who shall say that we were not so? Our chief was a tall, fierce fellow, with black matted hair, like so many clustering vipers beneath a ponderous turban; his eyes were strong and flaming as an eagle's; his breath was fiery, like a lion's breath. I would you could have seen him. He was of that mighty race of men who raised Carnac, Stonehenge, and the mysterious wonders of Elora; who built the Babylonian Tower, and reared the sunken splendours of Maha Bali Puram. These heroic sons of gods, or demi-gods, are departed, and in their place subsists a weak, degenerate tribe of pale-eyed,

craven-hearted drudges, who love to compass gold by trickery and deceit, rather than by the daring of the strong right hand. And they win it, but are not worthy of the prize. My soul spits at them ; my heart loathes their very name. I hate to think of them—so I have betaken myself away to die amid the green hills and silent dales, where I feel freedom, and see not knaves or cowards. This was my sword," and here the old man produced a Belochee blade of the most exquisite temper. It was folded reverently in silk and velvet, and when he bared it to the setting sun, he kissed its glittering point as if it were some cherished relique of a fakir or saint, or holy Yoge of the fanes. On the upper part, and just beneath the hilt, was graven a sacred motto—" God gave the sword to man to save his spirit from dishonour." And as he decyphered for me this warrior text, his eyes shone with some of their ancient lightnings ; and I could see that his heart beat with a stronger pulse than usual. He handed the sword to myself first, and afterwards to Manasam ; and evidently enjoyed the feeling of respect which we appeared to evince as we touched this cherished memorial of past achievements.

“With that sword,” said he, “I have slain fifty men. I speak not figuratively, but an actual fact. When the fiftieth head had rolled upon the dust, then, and not till then, did I relinquish the loved companion of my youth.”

And kissing it again, he enveloped it within its gorgeous covering, and laid it by his side.

“Our robber chief was wedded—well, I suppose I must say wedded—to a daughter of Sindhia. Where he got her, no one knew. Whether she had been torn from a forest cot, or from a royal hareem, was a secret. Enough for us was it that she was our Chieftain’s wife, and that her word or even nod, was law absolute. Dark she was as starry night; dark, yet gloriously bright and lovely. When you looked into her black eyes, rolling spheres of flame beneath her white and queen-like brow; when you watched her long raven hair, floating loosely over her neck of pure snow, as I have seen the sable clouds flying in wild disorder over the crystal heaven; or viewed her rose-like mouth, or, sweeter still, listened to the deep music of her voice; you knew that a woman of superior order was before you, and that she was made for

the greatest hero in the world. She was a splendid savage—wild as a tigress, and equally untameable. You loved, yet dreaded to look upon her. Her motions were as quick as lightning flashes. She was never still; you could as easily chain the winds of heaven, or the green and ever gliding ocean. Rest was wholly foreign to her nature. She was one of those spirits of flame that if they are still, die and are forgotten. Her lord was an uncultivated brute—strong as an elephant, bloody as a hyena, subtle as a lion, but wholly rude and ignorant. He was a mere animal. As an animal, he was perfect; for no one member of the brute creation could be compared with him; but as a man, he was inferior to many of our tribe. I have seen at Athens and Rome statues of demi-gods or heroes,—Hercules, Theseus, and Moses. Well, such in outline was Beloli. He had their mighty limbs, and muscles of steel; but he had no informing soul within to give refinement or perfection to this gorgeous mass of bone and flesh, and symmetry. What sympathy could there be between him and Hamida? There was none. It was the living wed-

ded to the dead. It was the star Venusi bound to the dark and gloomy Saturn. It was a spirit of light, chained to one of the dark spirits of clay ; chafing the chain ; restless and evermore unhappy.

“ Upon a time it happened that she fell ill. There was no leech among our tribe. Beloli called two or three enchanters to his aid, but their nostrums were of no avail ; Hamida was evidently dying. Beloli’s rage knew no bounds. The baffled magi were scourged out of the tents ; they were dismissed with every mark of ignominy. In vain they denounced curses and revenge ; he heaped dirt upon them, and hunted them out of our bounds with his dogs. All was now confusion and despair. At this moment I came forward. I had always been a seeker after knowledge ; though a robber and the son of robbers, I had gained many a hidden gem of science. I had been singularly fortunate also ; for I had once rendered a service to an old crone on the hills, by saving her idiot son from a flogging in our tents, and she had repaid the obligation by imparting to me the secret virtues of many a lowly herb. I pledged my life for Hamida’s recovery. Beloli scanned me for sometime with a suspicious

eye, but at length accepted my offer. "Villain," he said, "what knowest thou of the healing art? but if thou failest, thou shalt die the death." I willingly consented, and he introduced me into the tent. Hamida was there—oh, how beautiful!—how glowingly beautiful even in the flush of fever! With a simple decoction, I at once produced a change; her recovery was rapid; she was well, almost before it could be hoped she was convalescent. I had indeed snatched her from the jaws of death. The means were not profound, but Hamida knew that I had saved her life. This was all the reward I sought. Beloli dismissed me with thanks. He gave me a suit of armour, all gold,—it had been plundered from a palace. But I cared not for it—and never wore it. Six months passed away, and I had almost forgotten what had taken place; when as I was lying one night alone by the river, looking at the moonbeams playing over its surface, I heard a slight noise; I started up, thinking it was a wild beast that stole upon me. I pulled out an arrow, and began to fit it to the string; when suddenly a low, sweet laugh was heard, and I was struck on the face by a piece of jasmine. I dropped my

arrow and waited ; no one appeared, and I lay down again. I knew that the lady—if it was a lady—would not take all this trouble for nothing ; and I determined that she should seek until she found me. All, however, remained still ; I lingered there for an hour, and the moon sank, and all was darkness, and I went home to my tent ; angry with myself that I had not followed up what seemed a lucky adventure. The next night, and many nights after, I sought the same retreat, but no one came. I cursed myself for a fool. I stamped with rage, and was almost tempted to destroy myself. Thus three or four weeks fled—fled did I say ?—no, crawled, crawled with leaden feet, till I was in despair and almost mad. A thousand wild, conflicting thoughts made chaos of my bosom, and I grew weak, timid, desperate and savage by turns. I no longer entered with anxiety into the measures of my companions. Many laughed at me as a poltroon, but I cared not. Yet one eye watched me during all the time.

“Well—let me come to the point. What is the use of spinning out an old man’s legend. We met, Hamida and I—how, when, or where it

matters not. She it was who had stolen upon me—but she dared not follow it up then. She retreated half frightened at what she did. But her fiery nature could not rest. Love occupied her whole being; she was wild, mad, fevered with her passion. We met—we loved—what more is needed to be said? Oh, the wild delirium of that passionate embrace! We were young—wild—dreamers—lovers. These phrases comprise everything—they embody a whole world of romance, sentiment and recklessness. But it lasted not. Those stolen interviews were sweet, but full of danger. Beloli heard of our meetings; some of his numerous spies whispered into his ear. He dissembled well. No look or word betrayed his knowledge. One day he called me to him. ‘Akiba,’ he said, ‘great is my faith in you. I am upon an expedition to the far off hills—I shall be absent for a week. Assume my place of command, and in my absence let your word be a law unto the brethren that remain.’ He called them before him, and thus spake, ‘Brother, I depart—I go with fifty men on an expedition. All ye who remain obey Akiba, he is my lieutenant. Obey him as myself,’ and

they promised to do so. That evening he departed ; his fifty chosen companions were with him. The watch fires were lighted ; I went the usual rounds and saw that all was secure. I posted sentinels, and stole into the tent of Beloli. Hamida was there. The hours passed on golden wings ; the stars rose one after the other, and walked in luminous paths across the purple heaven, and we looked out into that luminous arch of fiery beauty ; and she lay upon my breast ; for deeply, passionately did I love Hamida ; and when the night was at its middle course, we retired into the inner tent and fell asleep. I was awakened by a strange noise. Methought I heard the distant tramp of feet, yet it was a still and stealthy tramp. I rose to look forth into the gloom. Hamida was instantly beside me. There was a magnetic sympathy between us ; when *she* slept, *I* slept ; when either woke, slumber fled from the brain of the other. She folded her arms around me and said, ‘ Dear Akiba, what is it ?’ I whispered to her to be still, and making a slit in the tent, we peered outwards. My heart beat —was still—and beat again. She folded her long white, loving arms around me, saying, ‘ It

is a dream, Akiba—be not alarmed, come,’ and she half pulled me backwards. But I felt an inward monitor more powerful even than Hamida to my heart and spirit, and the monitor said, ‘Watch!’ Suddenly, quicker than I can speak the words, the tent was surrounded. I saw a body of armed men gather about us. All was darkness; all was silence; but there was a cool resolve about their movements that seemed the prelude to a dreadful deed. Then a loud voice spake, ‘Akiba, come forth!’ It was the voice of Beloli. It shot through me like an arrow of death; not for my own sake, but for the sake of Hamida. I knew not what to do, but silence seemed the wisest course I could adopt. Beloli waited for some moments; at length, finding that there was no answer, he advanced, armed, towards the tent. His men followed him. ‘Stand back!’ he cried, in a voice of thunder. I feared him not. Why should I? He was a ravisher of this fair woman. He had dragged her from her home; he had forced her to be his. Her heart she never gave him—nay, she loathed his very presence. In giving herself up to me she had broken no pledge, she had committed no

breach of faith ; she had violated no vow. Beloli had destroyed—I had saved her. Towards him all her feelings were those of hatred ; to me she felt gratitude, and where a woman gives her grateful heart we know that she gives all. Therefore did I fear him not. I knew that I had done him no wrong. I blushed not in the least. I trembled not before him. I advanced and pulled open the tent. I had drawn my sword. ‘Here I am,’ I said, ‘what wantest thou with me, Beloli?’ He started back ; terrible in his strength though he was, he did not hope that I should confront him. ‘Villain !’ he said, ‘ thou shalt die !—and thou shalt not die alone !’ Then he turned to his men and cried, ‘Fire !’ But before they could do so, Hamida was by my side. Her eyes flashed ; she flung herself before me ; the stars gleamed over her with their splendid light ; never had she looked so beautiful. Her night robe only was on her, and half her magnificent form could be seen. The robbers started back ; the majesty of her appearance, the glorious spirit which she evinced, abashed, appalled, transfixed them with a mighty awe. ‘Fire !’ she said, ‘fire, oh friends ! but

let every shot be aimed at me, for I alone am guilty—if guilt there be. This youth is innocent of wrong.' And she again presented herself like a buckler in my front, so that if they discharged their pieces they must have destroyed her. I was so utterly confused and paralyzed with fear for her, that I knew not what to do—otherwise I believe I should have rushed forward upon Beloli's sword. 'Fire!' he said again, with a ferocious cry—but they would not fire. Beloli himself moved not. In a moment the tent pole was removed, and we were enveloped in its folds. 'Fly!' said she, 'fly to the hills—the hills; and I will follow!' I easily escaped; but when I looked she was not near me. I hid myself under a hillock where a clump of bushes grew, and waited for her with a beating heart; but she came not. I stole down towards the camp again. Before I had gone half-way, a fierce light rose up around the fallen tent; the thick black felt ignited rapidly; a fearful blaze was seen of dry and green wood; and round the burning centre were the robbers and Beloli making a horrible outcry to the noise of tom-toms and sitarrs. My blood ran cold; Hamida had died to save me; she

had sacrificed herself for me—most worthless. In that moment, in that humiliating thought, I died a hundred times. Yet was my heart filled with admiration for this noble woman. I had still my matchlock in my hand—that trusted tube, whose aim had never failed. The flame and smoke, and sparks of death now rose higher and higher. No cry was heard from beneath that blazing tent. She had either perished instantly, or else that haughty heart disdained to weep. Beloli laughed; he ran round the fire with fierce exultation; his companions seemed pleased that at all events they had not shed the blood of their mistress. The distinction between shooting and burning her to death was a nice one; I suppose it satisfied the casuists among them. At all events they looked on and did not interpose; while Beloli heaped thicker and thicker the blazing brands. Then he raised his sword and waved it over his head, but in that instant he fell dead into the very fire himself had raised, and the echo of my matchlock rang among the hills."

Here the old man was silent—he remained so for a considerable interval. Suddenly he flung himself upon the ground—he moaned aloud; his

agony was dreadful to behold. The big tears coursed each other down his cheek and beard ; his bosom shook with an internal agony too great for words. He moaned, he cried, he beat his breast ; he struck his head against the earth. I almost feared that he was about to destroy himself. Never have I seen grief more violent. It was dreadful in so old a man. “ O, Hamida,” he exclaimed, “ form and beautiful spirit of my first, my last, my only love, look upon me from the sphere of light and beauty where I know thou art enthroned—look upon me with thy sweet fond eyes, and know by all the agonies I have endured and still endure, that none but thou hast had my heart. Thou has gone before me—for me indeed has thou sacrificed thy life ; yet was not thy love greater than mine, and could I by ten thousand deaths but bring thee back once more to earth and life, ten thousand deaths would I endure in proof of what I feel. Fair woman ! noble heart ! oh, hear me ! A wanderer have I been—a wild and wayward sinner ; unworthy of a love so great, so high, so holy and exalted, as thine. Oh ! what am I that thou shouldst die for me ?—a weak wretched worm. Yet do I love thee—I dare to

love thee who art all splendour and beauty. Pray for me, O Hamida—pray for me to the Supreme—to thee will Alla hearken, for thou art of the spirits whom He loves ; but as for me, poor miserable outcast, I dare not lift my voice to Him. O God, O Father, for *her* sake grant that we may meet again—Thy heaven were a void to me if I had not Hamida.”

We did all we could to soothe the old man, but success was impossible. He would not listen—perhaps he did not hear. He lay in terrible suffering, and would not be comforted. We commended him to the care of one of the women, and took our leave. We did not see him for several days. When we met, it was by chance amid the hills. The old man seemed to have grown older ; the lapse of a week had apparently added twenty years to his head. He did not seem to notice us ; he was absorbed in deep meditation. We did not obtrude upon him ; his grief was too sacred to be disturbed. A month elapsed, and we again met. He introduced the subject himself. We sat under the ruined church. The sun was sinking, and there was a golden valley of light in the west.

“Zala-Mayna,” said Akiba, “look upon yonder sunset. Like it are the dreams and hopes of youth. You see a gorgeous valley, a castle of pure gold, with battlements of silver, and a purple lake of waters. It seems the abode of heavenly spirits. The green waters smile in sunny brightness beneath ; the East is darkened as if with violet lines ; but they are tinged with golden brilliancy. If any earthly scene can give you an idea of celestial beauty, now you may behold it. But like all terrestrial things, this is an unreal spectacle. Even while you gaze upon it, the valley darkens, the castle melts away into an orange coloured mist, the silver battlements fade into a dim twilight, and the lake of purple water grows into dim cloud. So it is with all that is on earth. Everything we see is Maya ; a faint and transitory illusion. The sceptical in my country say that God also is Maya ; but the truly sage know that He alone is Real, but that all else is the Maya of the fancy. Follow and adore Him, therefore, through all vicissitudes ; all else but He is vapour.”

We conversed until the Evening Star arose. Our themes were high and holy. When we were wrapt in darkness, Akiba said,

“ Let me resume my story where I broke off ; yet all the rest is plain prose. This was the epic of my life, and no man has two epics. You must be content for the remainder with the dull lees. I vowed revenge, and fulfilled my vow. There was not one of those fifty bandits who thus surrounded the tent and destroyed Hamida that I did not follow up, and, in the course of time, destroy. It took me nearly six years before I had completed my purpose, but at the end of that time I had fifty dried scalps of my companions. No man can ever know what pains, what toils, what strange disguises it required before I could accomplish this glorious vengeance. But at the end of that time the great object of my life had been gained. I was at peace. I carried the scalps to the place where we encamped on that fatal night ; and on the very spot where stood Beloli’s tent, and the remains of Hamida reposed, I made a funeral pile, and sacrificed them to her manes. I then fled into a distant part of the country, and for a while sojourned in the woods. I lived with nature, and gave a respite to my passions. But after a year all the ardour of my nature again broke forth. I longed for action.

I panted once again to mingle in the fiery struggles of life. Shah Jehan was now involved in troubles ; the sceptre of Hindostan trembled in his feeble grasp. Addicted to his pleasures he was unable to reduce his sons to order ; he lived only in his past glories ; luxury and magnificence were all his care. But his four sons—they were perpetually fomenting strife and discord. The fiercest hatred burned in their hearts. Dara, the eldest and noblest, had been invested by his father with a share of the sovereign power ; but Aureng Zebe had long marked out the gorgeous crown of India for himself, and the better to assure success, he had assumed the mask of religious zeal and holiness. His austerities were the themes of applause, but only a few were cognisant of the ambition of his soul. He gathered partisans from all sides ; he was profuse in promises ; he was lavish also in rewards. Inferior in figure and manner to his two elder brothers, Dara and Sooja, and in true nobility of heart to his younger brother Morad, he outshone them by an appearance of solidity and gravity, which gave weight to all he said and did. He was plausible, false, and dissimulating ; and could sow

dissention among the most intimate friends, without himself appearing to be aught except the mutual confidant of both. When the Mogul fell ill, and Dara had half assumed the sovereignty, Sooja rebelled, but was speedily overthrown. Morad, the youngest son, now took the field. He wrote to Aureng Zebe, and solicited his assistance. This crafty prince was delighted at the proposal. He well knew that if with Morad's help he could destroy the predominant power of Dara, he would have no difficulty of getting rid of Morad himself, as soon as he had served his purpose. He sent an answer, accusing Dara of weakness, and Sooja of infidelity; both were consequently unworthy of the crown. "As for me," said he, "I have long since dedicated myself to the service of God; I desire only that safety and tranquillity which suit the fervency of my devotion. But I will, with my poor abilities assist Morad to take possession of a sceptre which the united wishes of the people of Hindostan have already placed in his hands. Morad may then think of his faithful Aureng Zebe, and assign him a quiet retreat, that he may pass the remainder of his life in the austerities of religion, and in communion

with God." Morad was utterly deceived ; he levied troops, and among his new recruits I was one. We crossed the Nerbudda, and having joined the forces of Aureng Zebe, tried our strength against the Maha Rajah. A terrible battle ensued. We were on the right flank ; Aureng Zebe occupied the left. After a bloody conflict we succeeded. The Maha Rajah fled, and we entered Ugein in triumph. Great was the consternation now at the Court of Shah Jehan. The Emperor himself resolved to take the field ; a step that would have destroyed the power of Aureng Zebe in one day, so greatly was Shah Jehan still adored by all the soldiers ; but Darah dissuaded him and went in person against the two rebel leaders. We met in the plains of Guzerat. Dara himself led on the troops. Never was there a more desperate fight, but the fall of Rustum in the beginning of the battle destroyed the expectations of Dara. With the life of his bravest general ended all further chance of victory. His troops fought like lions, but his evil star prevailed. A variety of untoward accidents intervened ; and at the very

moment when he should have led his soldiers against the wearied forces of his brothers, his elephant driver retreated in a panic, and all was lost. Aureng Zebe succeeded almost by a miracle. Never was a more extraordinary combination of lucky accidents than those that won for him that eventful battle.

Of the subsequent fate and fall of Morad, why need I speak? That brave prince became a victim to the treachery of his brother. Aureng Zebe assumed the imperial crown at Delhi, and Shah Jehan became his prisoner. With the fall of Morad, his soldiers were transferred to the new monarch, and I now swore fealty to Aureng Zebe. But he was not destined to sit beneath the imperial umbrella without perpetrating other crimes. Soliman, the son of Dara, was yet in arms. Dara himself was at the head of a large army. Aureng Zebe marched forth to meet him. We arrived on the banks of the Suttuluz, but there was no opposing foe. Disunion was in the councils of Dara; his camp was full of spies sent by the usurping emperor, who sowed suspicion and dissension. In the night preceding our arrival he fled. We pursued him rapidly. Our

scouts informed us that he had taken the direction of Moultan, and thither we advanced. But news was brought to Aureng Zebe that Sooja now was in the field, and was marching on Delhi. The emperor left the main army with some chosen troops, and went to meet his brother. We, in the meantime, followed. Dara again fled. He pursued various routes, but at length made a final stand at Ajmere, where he fortified his camp. Aureng Zebe having, in the meantime, destroyed the forces of Sooja, now rejoined us with his victorious troops. But the ramparts of his brother dismayed him. He prepared to outwit him. When the rigour of the lion availed not, he knew how to put forth the subtlety of the fox. Two of his generals had formerly served under Dara, but had fled from him as his star began to wane. These Aureng Zebe now employed in one of those crafty devices which never fail pretenders to religion. They sent a letter to Dara, craving forgiveness, and offering assistance, provided he would leave the gates of his camp open for their reception. Dara fell into the snare. Before the day dawned all our troops were in arms; we were drawn up

behind the tents, and hidden from the view of Dara. The pretended fugitives issued forth in a large body; we pursued them, and fired our cannon on their rear, but it was only blank cartridge. Dara was wholly deceived. He came forth himself to welcome his repentant friends. They bore down all before them, and took possession of his camp. We followed, and the fate of India was decided in half an hour. Dara now fled with his family into the burning deserts. Every one deserted him; his own soldiers plundered and robbed him. The petty nobles hunted him from among them. At length he was betrayed by Sooja, whose life he had twice saved, but who now received an immense bribe from Aureng Zebe, the price of his brother's blood.

“We brought him to Delhi; even we, when we saw him meanly dressed, and bound in chains, pitied the eldest son of Shah Jehan. But it was Fate—and who can resist? He was carried through the city, which he had so often paraded with royal pomp, on an old decrepid elephant, with tattered housings; he was clothed in coarse linen; his turban was ragged; his hair had grown grey during his misfortunes. The lowest

among the rabble pitied when they saw him; the women burst into tears. Dara retained his dignity, but his young son was weeping by his side. He was conducted to Chizarabad, and his death decreed. In the dead of the night Aureng Zebe despatched the assassins. They rushed into the cell where Dara and his son were imprisoned. They tore them asunder and prepared to strangle him. But the blood of the descendant of Timour arose against this infamous death. Dara stabbed one of the villains with his penknife. They immediately fell upon him with their swords. His son, though in chains, rushed into the cell, and saw them in the act of beheading his father. The assassins left him with the decapitated trunk, and carried the bloody memorial to Aureng Zebe. That monarch had been in dreary expectation all the night for their return. When the murderers arrived, they were immediately admitted to his presence. The bloody head was presented, but the features could not be recognised. He ordered a charger of water to be brought, and when he had wiped away the clotted gore with his handkerchief, he saw that it was indeed his brother's

head. ‘Alas! unfortunate man,’ he exclaimed; but Aureng Zebe was more to be pitied than his victim. For a few short years of grandeur he bartered his everlasting hopes of heaven. Where is he now? And what avails his villany?

“I saw him sit upon the peacock throne, the greatest wonder of art that man has ever seen; before which the pageantry of Alexander, Xerxes, or Cambyses fade into dirt. The ceiling of the Dewann Khan, in which it was set, and which was the chamber set apart for royal audience, was incrusted with silver foliage, massive, rich, and shining; columns of white marble, adorned with inlaid flower-work of beautiful stones, supported the roof. Around the cornice, in Persian letters of gold, was written—‘If there be a paradise upon earth, this is it,—’tis this, ’tis this.’ The pillars themselves were hung with tapestries of purified gold, having the ground of gold, and for the roof of the hall there was nothing but great canopies of flowered satin, fastened with red silken cords that had big tufts of silk, mixed with threads of gold hanging on them. The throne was formed of solid gold, incrusted over with diamonds, rubies, sapphires,

and emeralds. Two peacocks stood upon it with their tails expanded, which were studded with various jewels to represent the life. Between the peacocks stood a parrot, of the ordinary size, cut out of one emerald. There were also two nose-gays, consisting of various sorts of flowers, all of beaten gold enamelled. The twelve columns that upheld the canopy were set round by rows of pearl ; and at each side of the throne were two umbrellas, the handles of which were about eight feet high, covered with diamonds ; the umbrellas themselves were of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with pearl. And I saw Aureng Zebe sitting on this throne splendidly apparelled in white satin, flowered with the finest gold. His turban was of cloth of gold, having a bird wrought upon it like a heron, whose feet was covered with diamonds of an extraordinary bigness and price, with a great Oriental topaz which may be said to be matchless, shining like a little sun. A collar of large pearls hung about his neck to his stomach, and a transparent jewel, with a diamond appendant to it, as large as an egg, encompassed with rubies and emeralds, was so suspended from the canopy that

it always met his eye wheresoever he looked. Around him were his Omrahs glittering with jewels innumerable; offering presents of fine golden vessels set with precious stones, or basins filled with pearls, diamonds, emeralds, or rubies. And I said unto myself, 'Verily these are fine hours with thee, O King; but behind thy majesty and magnificence I see death and dim corruption; and even at this moment before thine eye, in place of yon diamond, it is thy brother's bloody head thou seest; and in thine ear, in place of all these sounding flatteries, it is thy prisoned father's sighs and groans that ring. And in a few years all shall pass away, and thou shalt be carried forth a stiff corse, and in the hour of death thou shalt curse the energy that raised thee to command, through heaps of murdered men, and over heaps of broken oaths. Then shalt thou know that all these scenes are hollow as a human skull; and thou shalt sup full on sorrow and despair. Thou shalt cast thine eye backward, and it shall be met with blood; thou shalt cast thine eye forward, and thou shalt perceive darkness and despair. And they who now surround thee would not give a moment of their own days

to protract thine ; albeit they now profess entire submission, and are ready with their lives to prove their fealty to thy person.' And as I thought these things, a mist came over my eyes."

Here Akiba was again silent ; his gaze was fixed on vacancy ; the expression of his features was rapt, and as if inspired. A wild gleam glittered in his eyes ; he seemed awed and daimon-moved.

"Yes," he cried, "I see it all. This gorgeous glittering villany hath within it the essence of its own ruin. Yet a few years more and all will be overwhelmed. Thou also, O Delhi, which now towerest royally over the plains, shalt be destroyed ; and the peacock throne of Shah Jehan shall be broken into fragments. The gardens of Shalimar, now splendid with their cypress avenues and sparkling fountains, their rose-bowers thick with nightingales ; their jewel crusted caves that shelter from the heat, their cedars shielding out the sun, shall be a waste and a desert, and their owner shall recognize them no longer. Methinks I stand upon the lofty summit of Mejnoon, and gaze downward over that dazzling city ; its thousand minarets of marble ; its thousand cupolas of polished metal, mirrored in

the shining waters of the Jumna ; and by the grand canal on which King Feroze squandered millions. I see the gay procession pass of princes, and rajahs, followed by corsletted and bucklered crowds that glow in polished steel and gold, while camels, elephants, and horses move in all the pride of purple housings and silver knots. But a cloud arises, and all is tempest—tempest, lightning and the voice of thunders. The stately tower of Kootoob is wrapped in night, and the marble resting home of Humayoon is gathered in the thick folds of many mists. Midnight wreathes the Jumna Musjid which Aureng Zebe himself erected, to diffuse through Ind and Europe his sanctified renown ; and to purge himself from shame or sin, for an aged father imprisoned in his palace, and a gallant brother butchered like a wolf. Within it kneels the king himself, clothed in rags—his purple robes are laid aside ; and thus he prays to heaven for forgiveness. But a bolt smites him, and he is no more ; his palace passes ; his family is destroyed ; the crown obtained with so much treachery and blood is transferred into another's hand ; and all that remains of Aureng Zebe is the memory of

his crimes, and the lesson of his retribution ; the folly of the guilty, and the unerring justice of the Supreme.

“ The fate and fall of Dara worked a wonderful change in my temper. I said to myself, ‘ This life suits me not.’ Years began to exercise their humanising effect on me. I left the ranks when I was not yet thirty years old and became a pilgrim. I visited all the sacred shrines of India ; I cared not whether they were dedicated to Brahm, to Alla, or to Hormuzd—so long as they were consecrated to God, I paid them veneration. Soumanth and Benares, Sri Saila and Maha Kala, Om-Kara, and Tryambaka, had equal claims for me ; and I became gradually initiated into sacred lore ; learning equally from Buddhist and from Brahmin, the most recondite mysteries of their respective creeds. At length, having traversed India, I penetrated China, and made the pilgrimage of that most wonderful land, seeing all that could be seen, and learning the theology of that most ancient people, who are the lineal descendants of Nuh, whom Europeans call Noah, and the Chinese call Fohi ; the former name being unpronounceable in their language.

From China I passed into Russia, and so into European Turkey, from which I descended into Italy and Spain, and, traversing France, crossed the sea, and joined myself to the gypsies, whom I found to be of our people—the same in blood, in language, and in affinity—and with them I mean to pass the brief remnant of my days. I have given orders for my body to be laid in Stonehenge; that Cyclopean monument of the Cuthite priests of India; and there shall it repose until the world is renewed, and all things are restored to their primal condition. The summary of my life may be comprised in one sentence:— Mankind is everywhere the same; a mixture of good and evil. God is everywhere the same; the rewarder of the virtuous, and the punisher of the wicked. Truth is everywhere the same; one and unmixed, and wholly different from the popular belief. Life is everywhere the same; a toilsome pilgrimage which conducts to heaven or hell, according to the way in which it is passed.”

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## NOTES.

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NOTE A.—CHAPTER I.—LADY MARY'S MARRIAGE.— She was married young, says Spence, and she told me with that freedom which travelling gives, that she was never in so great a hurry of thought as the month before she was married. She never slept any one night that month. You know she was one of the most celebrated beauties of her day, and had a vast number of offers, and the thing that kept her awake was who to fix upon. She was determined as to two points, from the first, that is to be married to somebody, and not to be married to the man her father advised her to have. The last night of the month she determined, and in the morning left the husband of her father's choice, buying the wedding ring, and scuttled away to be married to Mr. Wortley.

NOTE B.—CHAPTER II.—The correspondence which passed between Lady Mary and Mr. W. M., fully justifies the description of their intercourse contained in this chapter. The letters may be seen in Lord Wharncliffe's edition, a work which, without apparently designing it, is the most fearful condemnation of his ancestress. But what would the collection have been, had it not been weeded by fire?

Soon after her marriage, says her grand-daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, in the Introductory Anecdotes, prefixed to Lord Wharncliffe's edition of the letters, she (Lady M.) resumed the practice of writing a journal, and persisted in it as long as she lived, communicating what she wrote to no person whatever. The diary, of course, became voluminous. Lady Bute, who knew nothing of it till it came into her possession a few days before her mother's death, always kept it under lock and key; and though she often looked over it

herself, and would sometimes read passages from it aloud to her daughters and friends, yet she never trusted any part out of her hands, except the five or six first copy books, which, at a late period, she permitted one of her family to peruse alone, upon condition that nothing should be transcribed. All that she thus in any way imparted related to distant days, to transactions long since past, and people of a former generation ; meanwhile she constantly declared it was her determined resolution to destroy the whole, as a sacred duty owing to the deceased, whose having forgotten or neglected to leave express orders for the purpose made it only the more incumbent upon her survivors. The journal was accordingly burned, although with evident reluctance, and not till Lady Bute felt the close of her life drawing near, when the act itself sounded too solemn a note of preparation, for those who loved her as she deserved to think of opposing it, or, indeed, to care at all about a matter which would then have seemed totally indifferent had it concerned the finest work in the world. Lady Bute so admired her mother's writings, and took such pleasure in reading her letters, to those whom she thought endowed with taste enough to relish them, that it might have been held sufficiently certain she had the most cogent reasons for making what clearly appeared a sacrifice ; yet, as youth is inconsiderate, and the fragments she did allow to be seen or heard were not alike amusing, she was very often assailed with entreaties to forego her design ; and pressed on this head she would ask whether supposing the case one's own, one could bear the thought of having every crude opinion, every transient wish, every angry feeling that had flitted across one's mind, exposed to the world after one was no more ; and though she always spoke of Lady Mary with great respect, yet it might be perceived that she knew it had been too much her custom to note down and enlarge upon all the scandalous rumours of the day, without weighing their truth, or even their probability ; to record as certain facts, stories that perhaps sprang up like mushrooms from the dirt, and had as brief an existence, but tended to defame persons of most spotless character. In this age, she said, everything got into print sooner or later ; the name of Lady Mary Wortley would be sure to attract curiosity, and were such details ever made public they would never edify the world, nor do honour to her memory. These were Lady Bute's arguments, and what could any one who had a sense

of rectitude urge in reply? especially since it must be acknowledged that in the volumes which she did communicate, the earliest written, and one may be confident the least exceptionable, there occasionally appeared traits of satire that showed what might ensue when the vexations and cares of advancing life should have soured the mind, given objects a darker shade of colour, and made farther demands upon a Christian charity not at all likely to have increased in the meantime. These volumes comprised the years immediately succeeding Lady Mary's marriage (1713, 1714, 1715), and also the time of Mr. Wortley's embassy. What passed every day was set down; often only in a line, or half a line, as thus: "Stayed at home alone," "Went to such a place," "Saw such a person," so that frequently three or four weeks took up but a single page. Sometimes again an occurrence or a conversation would be given at a very great length, sometimes dispatched with one sharp sentence like the following humorous application of a speech in Dryden's Spanish Friar, "Lady Hinchinbroke has a dead daughter—it were unchristian not to be sorry for my cousin's misfortune, but if she has no live son Mr. Wortley is heir—so there's comfort for a Christian!"

Spence mentions a treatise written by Lady Mary, which her family have not yet published. "It was from the customs of the Turks," she says, "that I first thought of a *septennial bill for the benefit of married persons*, and of the advantages that might arise from our wives having no portions." On this Mr. Spence observes, "That lady's *little treatise* upon those two subjects is very prettily written, and has very uncommon arguments in it. She is very strenuous for both these tenets. That every married person should have the liberty of declaring *every seventh year* whether they choose to continue to live in that state for another seven years or not; and she also argues that if women had nothing but their own good qualities and merits to recommend them it would make them more virtuous and their husbands more happy, than in the present marketing way among us. She seems very earnest and serious on the subject, and wishes the legislature would take it under their consideration, and regulate these two points by her system."

NOTE C.—CHAPTER III., P. 57.—ADDISON.—Mr. Addison behaved in so tyrannical and assuming a manner, that he at last extorted from Mr. Pope the following lines.

Speaking of the Moores, Smiths, Welsteds, and other poetical triflers of the times, he turns directly on him, which, considering it was published after his death, is certainly very severe :—

“ Peace to all such ! but were there one whose fires,  
 True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires,  
 Blest with each talent and each art to please,  
 And born to write, converse, and live with ease ;  
 Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,  
 Bear like a Turk no brother near the throne,  
 View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,  
 And hate for arts that caused himself to rise ;  
 Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,  
 And without sneering teach the rest to sneer,  
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,  
 Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike ;  
 Alike reserved to blame or to commend,  
 A timorous foe and a suspicious friend,  
 Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieged,  
 And so obliging that he ne'er obliged,  
 Like Cato gave his little senate laws,  
 And sat attentive to his own applause,  
 While wits and templars every sentence raise,  
 And wonder with a foolish face of pride ;  
 Who, but must laugh if such a man there be,  
 Who would not weep if Addison were he ? ”

*Memoirs of Pope, by W. Ayre, Esq.*

Old Jacob Tonson, who was a Jew, and who had all the keenness of that race, summed up Addison's sly hypocrisy with a terrible sneer. “ One day or other,” he said, “ you'll see that man a bishop ”—as if the extreme of cant, hypocrisy, and servility, could no farther go.

NOTE D.—CHAPTER III., P. 57.—PRIOR.—Prior left most of his effects (says Pope) to the poor woman he kept company with; his Chloe (Bessie Cox, of Long Acre);—*everybody knows what a wretch she was.* I think she had been a little ale-house keeper's wife.—*Spence.*

Dennis thus describes Pope himself—“ A young, short gentleman, whose outward form—though it should be that of a downright monkey—would not differ so much from human shape, as his unthinking, immaterial part does from human understanding. He is as stupid and as venomous as a hunch-backed toad.”

One of the penny poets allude to him :—

“ Your pen with Marlborough's sword is much the same,  
 He fought—you write, for profit more than fame,  
 His eagles after grants and pensions flew,  
 And all *your* laurels from subscriptions grew.  
 His friendship, too, like yours, was false and feigned,  
 No longer lasting than his ends were gained,  
 Thus then at once we both your deeds rehearse,  
 Gold was his god of war, your god of verse.”

## NOTE E.—CHAPTER III., P. 59.—SWIFT ON WALPOLE.

“With favour and fortune fastidiously blest,  
 He’s loud in his laugh, and he’s coarse in his jest ;  
 Of favour and fortune unmerited—vain,  
 A sharper in trifles, a dupe in the main.  
 Achieving of nothing, still promising wonders,  
 By dint of experience, improving in blunders,  
 Oppressing true merit, exalting the base,  
 And selling his country to purchase his place ;  
 A jobber of stocks by retailing false news,  
 A prater at court in the sty'e of the stews ;  
 Of virtue and worth by profession a giber,  
 Of juries and senates the bully and briber :  
 Though I name not the wretch, you all know who I mean—  
 ’Tis the cur dog of Britain and spaniel of Spain.”

Walpole was of the Marquis of Wharton School, utterly without conscience.

The following character of this nobleman was published and sold in 1710, with his lordship’s name and titles at full length. It was written by Swift. Macaulay has adopted it as the ground work of *his* delineation of the Marquis in his History of England.

Thomas, Earl of Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by the force of a wonderfull constitution, has some years passed his grand climacteric without any visible effects of old age either on his body or his mind, and, in spite of a continual prostitution to those vices, which usually wear out both, his behaviour is in all the forms of a young man at five-and-twenty. Whether he walks, or whistles, or talks, or calls names, he acquits himself in each beyond a templar of three years standing. He seems to be but an ill dissembler, and an ill liar, although they are the two talents he most practises, and most values himself upon. The ends he has gained by lying appear to be more owing to the frequency, than the art of them, his lies being sometimes detected in an hour, often in a day, and always in a week. He tells them freely in mixed companies, although he knows half of those that hear him to be his enemies, and is sure they will discover them the moment they leave him. He swears solemnly he loves and will serve you ; and your back is no sooner turned, but he tells those about him you are a dog and a rascal. He goes constantly to prayers in the forms of his place, and will talk — and blasphemy at the chapel door. He is a Presbyterian in polities, and an atheist in religion ; but he chooses at present to — with a Papist. He has sunk his fortune endeavouring to ruin one kingdom, and

has raised it by going far in the ruin of another. He bears the gallantries of his lady with the indifference of a stoick, and thinks them well recompensed by a return of children to support his family, without the fatigues of being a father. He has three predominant passions which you will seldom find united in the same man, as arising from different dispositions of mind, and naturally thwarting each other ; these are love of power, love of money, and love of pleasure ; they ride him sometimes by turns, sometimes all together. Since he went into Ireland he seems most disposed to the second, and has met with great success, having gained by his government, of under two years, five and forty thousand pounds by the most favourable computation, half in the regular way, and half in the prudential, &c., &c." When Somers introduced Swift to Wharton as a fit person to be his chaplain, the latter alluding to Swift's supposed opinions on religion, said, " We must not encourage these fellows ; *we have not character enough ourselves.*" Wharton and Somers thoroughly understood each other.

NOTE F.—CHAPTER IV., P. 69.—*Every night we had prayers, &c*—To one who contemplates the true nature of the soul and spirit, and knows that they are what our course of life, our daily thoughts and actions make them, not what a death bed conversion and repentance are falsely supposed to make them. it is amusing to find all the wits and profligates dying in the odour of sanctity, like Rochester, Garth, Wycherley. Garth, says Spence, talked in a less libertine manner than he used to do, about the three last years of his life, but he was rather doubtful and fearful than religious. He sent to ask Addison on his death bed whether the Christian religion was true? It was usual for him to say that if there was any such thing as religion 'twas among the Roman Catholics ; probably from the greater efficacy we give the sacraments. He died a Papist, as I was assured by Mr. Blount, who carried the father to him in his last hours. He did not take any care of himself in his last illness, and had talked for three or four years as one tired of life ; in short, I believe he was willing to let it go. Wycherley died a Romanist, and has owned that religion in my hearing. If we are to believe Chesterfield, the thing was a mere form with most of those fine gentlemen. Pope, says he, was a Deist, believing in a future state. This he has often owned to me ; but when he died he *sacrificed a cock to Æsculapius*, and suffered the priests who got him to

perform all their absurd ceremonies on his body. It is to Chesterfield that the world is indebted for the proof that Swift ended as the Tale of a Tub shows him to have begun. The Dean died in the first month of the Earl's viceroyalty. He probably picked "The Day of Judgment" out of some confidential companion at Dublin; and in 1751 he communicated the piece to Voltaire, through whose correspondence it first transpired. It ends with that consummately finished confession of the church dignitary's faith—namely, that all was humbug.

"While each pale sinner hung his head,  
Jove, nodding, shook the heavens and said,  
Offending race of human kind,  
By nature, reason, learning blind ;  
You who through frailty slipped aside,  
And you who never fell—from pride,  
You who in different sects were shamm'd,  
And come to see each other d—d,  
(So some folk told you, but they knew  
No more of Jove's designs than you)  
The world's mad business now is o'er,  
And I resent these pranks no more ;  
I to such blockheads set my wit !  
I damn such fools ! Go to, you're bit."

NOTE G.—CHAPTER IV., P. 70.—*How to lure this man of fashion, &c.*—POPE TO LADY MARY.—"Among the rest you have all that I am worth, that is my works; there are few things in them but what you have already seen, except the Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard, *in which you will find one passage that I cannot tell whether to wish you should understand it or not*" Commentators have puzzled themselves much as to what this passage may be. It appears to me that it begins—

"How oft when pressed to marriage," &c.

and that it ends with the line—

"And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart."

NOTE H.—CHAPTER IV., P. 72.—LADY MARY.—Her Town Eclogues, published in 1716, are abominable. Do the following lines refer to some unsuccessful lover's attack ?

"She paused, and fixed her eyes upon her fan ;  
He took a pinch of snuff, and thus began :  
Madam, if love—but he could say no more,  
For Mad'moiselle came rapping at the door,  
The dangerous moments no adieu afford.  
Begone, she cries, I'm sure I hear my lord ;  
The lover starts from his unfinished loves,  
To snatch his hat and seek his scattered gloves ;  
The sighing dame to meet her lord prepares,  
While Strephon, cursing, slips down the back stairs."

NOTE I.—CHAPTER, IV., P. 82.—LADY MARY AND LADY MAR.—The poet returned to the charge in his Epistle to Arbuthnot. The line

“Who starves a sister or denies a debt,”

was understood to apply to Lady Mary, but was generally considered inexplicable or a mere calumny. The case of M. Ruremonde was known only to a few; *none of Lady Mary's descendants ever heard of her starving her sister!* So says Lady Louisa Stuart; and the letters between the sisters breathe only the tenderest affection. Lady Mar, says Bowles, could not have been in any great degree of penury, for when Lord Mar was banished in consequence of the rebellion of 1715, his Scotch estate, which had been settled on his wife, was freely given her by George I. for the maintenance of herself and daughter. A few years since, however, the matter was explained by the publication of some letters of Lord Grange, younger brother of the Earl of Mar, who has obtained an infamous celebrity from his treatment of his wife, banished by him to the remote island of St. Kilda. Grange was a busy, plotting politician, and in 1734 he resigned his seat on the Scottish bench, that he might join the political party arrayed against Walpole. He became secretary to the Prince of Wales, and in this situation may have met with Pope. In the printed correspondence of Lady Mary there is a blank in the letters addressed to the Countess of Mar of no less than twelve years. Part of this time the Countess would seem to have suffered from mental aberration. Grange writes to his brother, Thomas Erskine, 22nd March, 1730:—“Lady Mar, they say, is quite well, and so, as in common justice, she can no more be detained as a lunatic, but she is obstinately averse from appearing in Chancery, that the sentence may be taken off. *Her sister probably will oppose her liberty, because thereby she would lose*, and Lord M. in effect gain, five hundred yearly, and the poor lady being in her custody and under her management, had need to be very firmly recovered, *for the guardian may at present so vex, tease and plague her, that it would turn any body mad.* Grange had a pecuniary interest in procuring the liberation of the Countess, who with two thousand yearly out of the estate, was, he said, in the hands of his foes, and there was no remedy but to get a pardon for Lord Mar, who could then legally claim his own wife and her estate.

He succeeded in getting the deranged lady into his hands, but on the road to Scotland *she was seized by the Lord Chief Justice's warrant, procured on the affidavit of Lady Mary, that her sister was insane*, and after many "wimples and turns," as Grange expresses it, a settlement was made with Lady Mary, and some grants obtained for Lord Mar's family. Walpole fixed the amount to be given to her ladyship for the custody of her sister at five hundred pounds yearly, though he swore, adds Grange, "that he did not believe she would lay out two hundred pounds on Lady Mar." These details explain, if they do not fully justify the poet's satire. CARRUTHERS' *Life of Pope*, page 193.

The above extract shows with what caution all that comes from Lord Wharncliffe in the way of denial should be received. It is impossible to believe that there was no tradition of this affair in the family. Another statement of Walpole's is curious. Writing to Sir Horace Mann, he says:—"Pray tell me if you know anything of Lady Mary Wortley? We have an obscure story here of her being in durance in the Brescian or Bergamesco; *that a young fellow whom she set out with keeping* has taken it into his head to keep her close prisoner, not permitting her to write or receive any letters but what he sees. He seems determined, if her husband should die, not to lose her, as the Count — lost my Lady Oxford." And in the next letter he again alludes to this "report." Lord Wharncliffe passes off this in the following manner, which appears to be anything but satisfactory. "Among Lady Mary's papers there is a long paper, written in Italian, not by herself, giving an account of her having been detained some time against her will, in a country house belonging to an Italian count, and inhabited by him and his mother. This paper seems to be drawn up either as a case to be submitted to a lawyer for his opinion, or to be produced in a court of law. There is nothing else to be found in Lady Mary's papers, referring in the least degree to this circumstance, &c., &c." But is there no family tradition? and was it not explained in the papers destroyed? and why is not the paper itself set forth? The count who kept the lady in this odd sort of durance, was Count Palazzi: the affair is alluded to in a letter from General Graham to Count Algarotti, dated Venice, Dec., 1756. "Lady Mary is at liberty; lives at Padua, and I fancy intends to call Count Palazzi to account. I do not know the tenth part of her history there, but she began to

hint it to me when last here. She is more ashamed, I believe, for passing for a dupe in the eyes of the public, than she is of passing for a woman of gallantry." Lady Mary was then sixty-six! So strong was the ruling passion! This wretched affair was alluded to by Pope in the first edition of his *DUNCIAD* :—

" Whence hapless Monsieur much complains at Paris,  
Of wrongs from Duchesses and Lady Marys."

to which he attached the following note. "This passage was thought to allude to a famous lady who cheated a French wit of five thousand pounds in the South Sea year. But the author meant it in general of all bragging travellers, and of all w——'s and cheats under the name of ladies," which allusion to Lady M's oriental pilgrimages and her private pleasures must have conveyed the gall of wormwood to her soul. We next find the matter referred to by Mr. Horace Walpole, in one of his letters to Sir H. Mann. After saying that he had lately been at Woburn, where he had had an opportunity of seeing fifty letters of Lady M's to her sister Lady Mar, whom she treated so hardly while out of her senses, Horace Walpole adds as follows :—" Ten of the letters indeed are dismal lamentations and frights on a scene of villainy of Lady Mary's, who, having persuaded one Ruremonde, a Frenchman, and her lover, to entrust her with a large sum of money to buy stock for him, frightened him out of England by persuading him that Mr. Wortley had discovered the intrigue, and would murder him; and then would have sunk the trust. That not succeeding, and he threatening to print her letters, she endeavoured to make Lord Mar, or Lord Stair cut his throat." Pope hints at these anecdotes of her history in that line—

" Who starves a sister or denies a debt."

One of these letters has disappeared; the remaining nine are published by Lord Wharncliffe, Lady Mary's great grandson, and we there find the lady's own account of this singular transaction. Writing in 1720 or 1721 (eight years after her marriage), she says :—" A person, whose name is not necessary, because you know it, took all sorts of methods, during almost a year to persuade me that there never was so extraordinary an attachment (or what you

please to call it) as they had to me. This ended in coming over to make me a visit against my will, and as was pretended, very much against their interests. I cannot deny I was very silly in giving the least credit to this stuff. But if people are so silly, you'll say 'tis natural for anybody that is good-natured to pity and be glad to serve a person they believe unhappy on their account.'" She then goes on to say that the Frenchman had given her his money, all of which she laid out in stock, but the shares falling there was a loss. Having communicated this to Ruremonde, "I received a letter from him, in which he told me that he had discovered all my tricks that he was convinced I had all his money untouched; and he would have it again, or he would print all my letters to him, which, though God knows, very innocent in the main, yet may admit of ill-constructions, besides the monstrousness of being exposed in such a manner. \* \* \* I beg your pardon, dear sister, for this tedious account; but you see how necessary 'tis for me to get my letters from this madman. Perhaps the best way is by fair means; at least, they ought to be first tried." In the next letter she writes:—"R—— wrote to me some time ago to say if I would immediately send him £2,000 sterling he would send me an acquittance. As this was sending him several hundreds out of my own pocket, I absolutely refused it; and in return I have just received a threatening letter to print I know not what stuff against me. If you have any compassion for me or my innocent children, I am sure you will try to prevent it; the thing is too serious to be delayed. I think (to say nothing of either blood or affection) that humanity and christianity are interested in my observation." Again she writes:—"R—— does nothing but lie, and either does not or will not understand what is said to him. You will forgive me troubling you so often with this business. The importance of it is the best excuse; in short—

" 'Tis joy or sorrow, peace or strife,  
'Tis all the colour of remaining life."

In her sixth letter she says:—"He has writ a letter to Mr. W——, to inform him of the whole affair; luckily for me, the person he has sent it to, assures me it shall never be delivered." Again she writes:—"I have actually, in my present possession, a formal letter directed to Mr. W——, to acquaint him with the whole business. You

may imagine the inevitable eternal misfortunes it would have thrown me into, had it been delivered by the person to whom it was entrusted. I wish you would make him sensible of the infamy of his proceeding, which can no way in the world turn to his advantage. \* \* \* All he can expect by informing Mr. W— is to hear him repeat the same things I assert; he will not retrieve one farthing, and I am for ever miserable. \* \* \* I beg with the utmost earnestness that you would make him sensible of his error—observe 'tis very necessary to say something to fright him. I am persuaded if he was talked to in a style of that kind, he would not dare to attempt to ruin me." We next find her writing:—"I am now at Twickenham; 'tis impossible to tell you, dear sister, what agonies I suffer every post day. My health really suffers so much from my fears, that I have reason to apprehend the worst consequences. \* \* \* I desire nothing from him but that he would send no letters or messages to my house at London, where Mr. Wortley now is. I have come hither in hopes of benefit from the air, but I carry my distemper about in an anguish of mind that visibly decays my body every day. I am too melancholy to talk of any other subject. Let me beg of you (dear sister) to take some care of this affair, and think you have it in your power *to do more than save the life* of a sister that loves you." In the ninth letter the lady writes:—"I send you, dear sister, by Lady Lansdowne, this letter, accompanied with the only present that was ever sent me by that monster. I beg you to return it immediately. I am told he is preparing to come to London. \* \* \* I desire you to assure him that my first step will be to acquaint Lord Stair with all his obligations to him, as soon as I hear he is in London; and if he dares to give me any further trouble, I shall take care to have him rewarded in a stronger manner than he expects. There is nothing more true than this; and I solemnly swear that if all the credit or money that I have in the world can do it, either for friendship or hire, I shall not fail to have him used as he deserves; and since I know his journey can only be to expose me, I shall not value what noise is made. Perhaps you may prevent it. I leave you to judge of the most proper method. 'Tis certain no time should be lost; fear is his predominant passion, and I believe you may fright him from coming hither, where he will certainly find a reception very disagreeable to him."

NOTE L.—CHAPTER VII., P. 146.—The portrait alluded to here is now in the possession of Dr. KENEALY, Q.C., together with one of POPE, by JERVAS, and several others of the same period. .

She is painted with hair of immense length, flowing in a dark, rich, waving billow almost to her waist; her robe is of a deep orange cloth or silk, with an under dress of lawn looped up on the arm with a button or jewel. The neck and bust are very beautiful; the mouth particularly small, like a half-opened rose-bud; the eyes intensely purply dark, and full of keen expression, large, yet soft; the face oval; the eyebrows curved and prominent; the complexion delicately fine; the forehead a most perfect arch, with a little curl coming out just over the left eyebrow; on her head a golden circlet, which she brought from the east, with a dark sapphire, and a pearl pendant from it. It is topped with a silver crescent, and a veil descends down the left shoulder. Her ear is delicately small, and she has a solid pearl earring. It was hoped that the second volume of this autobiography would be enriched with a copy of this portrait, and it was entrusted to Mr. Mayall, the Great Master of Photography for this purpose; but after making several attempts with his most powerful lenses, he was obliged to give up the attempt. The colours all ran into one tone, and the copy was impossible. The reader must, therefore, be content with this most meagre sketch of one of Kneller's finest works, and one which Pope himself may be said to have superintended with a lover's eyes.

[The letters that relate to it are not destitute of amusement now, when we know all about Pope and Lady M.]

MR. POPE TO LADY M. W. M.

“Madam,—Sir Geoffrey happening to come from London yesterday, as I did myself, will wait upon you this morning, at twelve, to make a sketch of you in your dress, if you will give leave. He is really very good to me. I heartily wish you will be so too. But I submit to you in all things—nay, in the manner of all things; your own pleasure and your own time. Upon my word I will take yours, and understand you as you would be understood, with a real respect and resignation when you deny me anything, and a hearty gratitude when you grant me anything. Your will be done, but God send it may be the same with mine.—I am, most truly, yours, A. POPE.

“P.S.—I beg a single word in answer, because I am to send to Sir Godfrey accordingly.

“To the Right Hon. the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,  
at Twickenham.

“Indeed, dear madam, it is not possible to tell you whether you give me, every day I see you, more pleasure or more respect; and, upon my word, whenever I see you after a day or two’s absence, it is just such a view as that you yesterday had of your own writings. I find you still better than I could imagine, and think I was partial before to your prejudice.

“The picture dwells really at my heart, and I have made a perfect passion of preferring your present face to your past. I know and thoroughly esteem yourself of this year; I know no more of Lady Mary Pierrepont, than to admire of what I have heard of her, or be pleased with some fragment of hers, as I am with Sappho’s. But now—I cannot say what I would say of you now; only still give me cause to say you are good to me, and allow me as much of your person as Sir Godfrey can help me to. Upon conferring with him yesterday, I find he thinks it absolutely necessary to draw your face first, which, he says, can never be set right on your figure, if the drapery and posture be finished before. To give you as little trouble as possible, he purposed to draw your face with crayons, and finish it up at your own house in the morning, from whence he will transfer it to canvass, so that you need not go and sit at his house. This, I must observe, is a manner they seldom draw any but crowned heads, and I observe it with a secret kind of pleasure. Be so kind as to tell me if you care he should do this to-morrow at twelve; though, if I am but assured from you of the thing, let the manner and time be what you best like, let every decorum you please, be observed, I should be very unworthy of any favour from your hands, if I desired any at the expense of your quiet and conveniency in any degree.—I am, sincerely yours, A. POPE.”

His satisfaction with the picture when finished inspired this extemporaneous praise in verses, which were immediately written down and given to Lady Mary, by whom they were preserved.

“The playful smiles around the dimpled mouth,  
That happ’ air of majesty and truth,  
So would I draw—but oh! ‘tis vain to try,  
My narrow genius does the power deny.  
The equal lustre of the heavenly mind,  
Where every grace with every virtue’s joined,  
Learning not vain, and wisdom not severe,  
With greatness easy, and with wit sincere—  
With just description show the soul divine.  
And the whole princess in my work would shine.”

Such was this charming pair before Pope's repulse by the Lady ; and his unfortunate sprawl on the carpet. After that all was changed. Then she became in his imitation of Horace (Satire I., book 2), the furious Sappho, whom the most unhappy of love's mishaps has befallen. Then he affects to believe that Mr. M. and his lady will plot to have him waylaid.

“Shylock and his wife,  
Will club their testers now to take your life.”

And, indeed, it was publicly reported that she, her husband, and Lord Hervey had actually hired two stout fellows, who fell upon the poet in one of his solitary walks at Twickenham, and flogged him like a schoolboy. Whether this was true or not—and it was probably true, it subjected Pope to so much ridicule, that he was obliged to publish the following advertisement :—

“Whereas there has been a scandalous paper cried about the streets, under the title of a *Popp upon Pope*, insinuating that I was whipped in Ham Walks, on Thursday last. This is to give notice that I did not stir out of my house at Twickenham *all that day*, and the same is a malicious and ill-grounded report.—A. P.”

The pamphlet stated that it was in the evening Pope had been hoisted and whipped ; and Pope, as it may be seen, reserves his denial to its having happened in the day. There are some quiet allusions to this in Lady Mary's letters, which satisfy me that the little man was actually horsed as the pamphlet describes.

The following are some of the verses which my lady and Lord Hervey wrote about this time :—

When God created thee, one would believe,  
He said the same as to the snake of Eve ;  
To human race antipathy declare,  
'Twixt them and thee be everlasting war.  
And all the sequel of the sentence dread,  
And whilst you bruise their heel, beware your head,  
Nor think thy weakness shall be thy defence,  
The female scold's protection in offence,  
Sure 'tis as fair to beat who cannot fight,  
As 'tis to libel those who cannot write ;  
And if thou drawest thy pen to aid the law,  
Others a cudgel or a rod may draw.  
If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue,  
Or give thy manifold affronts their due,  
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,  
Unwhipt, unblanketed, unkicked, unslain  
That wretched little carcase you retain,  
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,  
For thou'rt so mean they see and they despise.

When fretful porcupine with rancorous wing,  
 From mounted back should sport the harmless quill,  
 Cool the spectators stand, and all the while  
 Upon the angry little monster smile,  
 Thus 'tis with thee, while impotently safe,  
 You strike unwounding, we unhurt can laugh  
 Who but must laugh, this bully when he sees,  
 A puny insect shivering at a breeze ;  
 One overmatched by every blast of wind,  
 Insulting and provoking all mankind.  
 Is this the thing to keep mankind in awe ?  
 To make those tremble who escape the law ?  
 Is this the ridicule to live so long ?  
 The deathless satire and immortal song ?  
 No ! like the self blown praise thy scandal flies,  
 And as we're told of wasps, it stings and dies.

His grotto comes in for my lady's censure ; she calls it  
 the Palace of Dulness.

“ Her palace placed beneath a muddy road,  
 And such the influence of the dull abode,  
 The carrier's horse above can scarcely drag his load ;  
 Here chose the Goddess her beloved retreat,  
 Which Phœbus tries in vain to penetrate ;  
 Adorned within with shells of small expense,  
 Emblems of tinsel rhyme and trifling sense,  
 Perpetual fogs enclose the sacred cave,  
 The neighbouring sinks their fragrant odours gave.”

The allusion to Sappho was so shocking that it called forth from Lady Mary and Hervey certain verses addressed to the translator of the first satire of the second book of Horace ; on which Pope wrote to Lord Hervey as follows, with a sly recollection of his having called her Sappho, though he chooses at the time to forget it :—

“ In regard to the right honourable lady, your lordship's friend, I was far from designing a person of her condition by a name so derogatory to her as that of Sappho, a name prostituted to every infamous creature that ever wrote verse or novels. I protest I never applied that name to her in any verse of mine, public or private, and I firmly believe not in any letter or conversation. Whoever could invent a falsehood to support an accusation, I pity, and whoever can believe such a character to be theirs I pity still more. God forbid the court or town should have the complaisance to join in that opinion. Certainly I meant it only of such modern Sapphos as imitate much more the lewdness than the genius of the ancient one, and upon whom their wretched brethren frequently bestow both the name and the qualification there mentioned.”

These were pleasant passages to come before the public, for so solemn a gentleman as Mr. E. W. Montagu.

**NOTE M.—CHAPTER IX., P. 188.—SOUTH SEA SWINDLE.**—The first report of the committee of secresy, when presented to the House, exposed a scene of fraud and iniquity almost unparalleled in the annals of history.

The committee stated that their inquiry had been attended with numerous embarrassments and difficulties; that in the different books were made false and fictitious entries, with blanks, erasures, and alterations, and in some the leaves were torn out. Some books had been destroyed, others secreted.

Before the South Sea Bill was passed, and with a view to promote it, the directors, to whom the secret management was principally intrusted, had disposed of a fictitious stock of £574,000.

As this fictitious stock was designed for promoting the Bill, the sub and deputy governors, Sir John Blunt, Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Chester, Mr. Holditch, and Mr. Knight, the cashier, had the chief disposal of it, and it was distributed as follows:—

	£
To the Earl of Sunderland, at the request of Mr. Craggs, sen.	... 50,000
The Duchess of Kendal	... 10,000
The Countess of Platen	... 10,000
Her two nieces	... 10,000
Mr. Craggs, senior	... 30,000
Charles Stanhope, esquire	... 10,000
The Sword Blade Company	... 50,000

It also appeared that Charles Stanhope had received a difference of £250,000, through the hands of Sir George Caswal and Co., but that his name had been partly erased from their books, and altered to Stangape. That Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had an account with Turner, Caswal, and Co., to the amount of £794,451, and that he had advised the company to make the second subscription £1,500,000, instead of a million, by their own authority, and without any Warrant. That of the third subscription, Aislabie's list amounted to £70,000; Sunderland's to £160,000; Cragg's to £659,000; and Stanhope's to £47,000. That on the pawned stock, which had been sold, there was, by the means of Mr. Knight, a deficiency of £400,000.

This report was succeeded by six others less important; at the end of the last the committee declared that the absence of Knight, who had been principally and solely en-

trusted, put a period to the inquiries into this black and destructive affair.—*Coxe's Walpole*.

The foregoing shows what worthy predecessors in fraud the gigantic robbers of the present century had—the baronets, bankers, and members of parliament, who within the last fifteen or twenty years have played such parts before the public, and have so utterly shaken the commercial honour of England. One of the rhymers of the past age thus described Sir John Blunt:—

“ Much injured Blunt! why bears he Britain's hate?  
 A wizard told him in these words our fate;  
 At length corruption, like a gen'ral flood  
 (So long by watchful ministers withstood)  
 Shall deluge all; and av'rice creeping on,  
 Spread like a low-born mist, and blot the sun;  
 Statesman and Patriot ply alike the stocks,  
 Peeress and butler share alike the box,  
 And judges job, and Bishops bite the town,  
 And mighty Dukes pack cards for half-a-crown.  
 See Britain sunk in lucre's sordid charms,  
 And France reveng'd on Anne's and Edward's arms.  
 'Twas no court badge, great scriv'ner! fir'd thy brain,  
 Nor lordly luxury, nor city gain;  
 No, 'twas thy righteous end, ashamed to see  
 Senates degenerate, patriots disagree,  
 And nobly wishing party rage to cease,  
 To buy both sides, and give thy country peace.”

Sir John Blunt, originally a scrivener, was one of the proprietors of the South Sea Company, and afterwards one of the directors and chief managers of the famous scheme in 1720. He was also one of those who suffered most severely by the Bill of Pains and Penalties on the said directors. He was a Dissenter of a most religious deportment, and professed to be a great believer. Whether he really did credit the prophecy here mentioned is not certain, but it was constantly in this very style he declaimed against the corruption and luxury of the age, the partiality of parliaments, and the misery of party spirit. He was particularly eloquent against avarice in great and noble persons, of which he had indeed lived to see many miserable examples. He died in the year 1732.—POPE; *Epistle to Allen Lord Bathurst*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Several of the South Sea Directors were secured and expelled the House. The Commons having ordered their doors to be locked and the keys laid on the table, summoned Sir Robert Chaplin, Bart.; Sir Theodore Janssen, Bart., Mr. F. Eyles, and Mr. Sawbridge to attend in their places imme-

diately ; then General Ross acquainted the House, “That they had already discovered a train of the deepest villainy and fraud that hell ever contrived to ruin a nation, which in due time they would lay before the House ; and that in the meanwhile, in order to a farther discovery, they thought it highly necessary to secure the persons of some of the directors and principal South Sea officers, and to seize their papers, which was ordered accordingly.”

Young Craggs had anticipated this, but died in time. Whether he made away with himself, like his worthy sire, is not quite free from doubt.

One who came out of the city told me he believed Mr. Craggs, senr., dying, if not actually dead, and gave some circumstances in confirmation of a whisper of his having taken a dose ; if so, it resembles in great measure Lord Essex’s case.— COXE’S *Walpole Correspondence* ; *Mr. Brodrick to Lord Middleton*.

It was generally expected that this day the Commons would have proceeded to that part of the report from the committee of secrecy, which related to James Craggs, senr., Esq., but whether the terror of his approaching trial, or the loss of a beloved son, for whom he had been amassing vast heaps of riches, cast a damp upon his spirits, he died the day before in a lethargic fit, leaving behind him an estate valued at one million and a half, to be divided among his three daughters, who are married to three members of parliament, viz., Mr. Trefusis, Mr. Newsham, and Mr. Elliot.— *Political State*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Subsequently the House of Commons resolved and passed :—

“That the said James Craggs was a notorious accomplice and confederate with the said Robert Knight, and some of the late Directors of the South Sea Company, in carrying on their corrupt and scandalous practices, and did by his wicked influence and for his own exorbitant gain, promote and encourage the pernicious execution of the late South Sea scheme.

“That all the estate, real and personal, of which the said James Craggs was seised or possessed, from and after the 1st day of Dec., 1719 (over and above what he stood seised or possessed of on the said 1st day of December), be applied for and towards the relief of the unhappy sufferers in the

South Sea Company, and for deterring all persons from committing the like wicked practices in the time to come."

Like all such things, these threats ended in little or nothing, for we read as follows:—

"After all the pains that have been taken to detect the villanies of the directors and their friends, I am afraid they will at last slip through their fingers, and that nothing further will be done as to confiscation, hanging, &c. There certainly is a majority in the House of Commons that are willing to do themselves and the kingdom justice; but they act so little in concert together that they are constantly baffled by a set of men whom guilt, money, &c., have linked in the closest bond."—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. vii., p. 800.

NOTE N.—CHAPTER IX., P. 188.—DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.—It is to be lamented that we have not Pope's character of this man, which he intended to have introduced into his essay on Man. "I have omitted," he says, "a character though I thought it one of the best I had ever written of a very great man, who had everything from without to make him happy, and yet was very miserable from the want of virtue in his own heart." It seems certain that he got a bribe of a thousand pounds from the Duchess for suppressing the Duke's character as well as her own, which latter he did not suppress. See CARRUTHER'S *Life of Pope*, p. 394.

NOTE O.—CHAPTER IX., P. 189.—KING GEORGE I.—This elderly Adonis ought not to be robbed of a portion of his fame in the annals of Venus, although his amatory feats do not appear to have extended beyond that of "cutting paper" in his lady's apartments, and he had the three named in the text on his establishment. "His Majesty," says Horace Walpole, "paid his new subjects the compliment of taking an English mistress, Miss Brett," daughter of the second husband of the notorious Countess of Macclesfield, Savage's mother. After the King's death, Miss Brett married Sir William Lemon. It was this connection that no doubt helped to save Savage from the scaffold, for the murder of Sinclair. George I. was heard to say in the drawing-room, upon the falling of the South Sea stock, "We had very good luck, for we sold out last week." Reading these things, who does not join in Pope's exclamation, "A tree is a nobler object than a prince in his coronation robes."

**NOTE P.—CHAPTER IX., P. 192.—KING GEORGE II.—**  
*Extracts from Lord Chancellor King's Notes on Domestic and Foreign Affairs.*

Nov. 24, 1727.—Sir R. Walpole came to my house. \* \* \* At this time he took occasion to tell me of the great credit he had with the King (George II.), and that it was principally by the means of the Queen, who was the most able woman to govern in the world.

Sept. 2, 1729.—On this occasion he (Sir R. W.) let me into several secrets relating to the King and Queen—that the King constantly wrote to her by every opportunity long letters of two or three sheets, being generally of all his actions, what he did every day, even to minute things, and particularly of his amours; what women he admired and used; and that the Queen to continue him in a disposition to do what she desired, returned as long letters, and approved even of his amours, and of the women he used, not scrupling to say that she was but one woman and an old woman, and that he might love more and younger women, and she was very willing he should have the best of them; by which means, and a perfect subserviency to his will, she effected whatsoever she desired, without which it was impossible to keep him within any bounds.—BOHN's edition of *Lord King's Life*, pp. 445—481.

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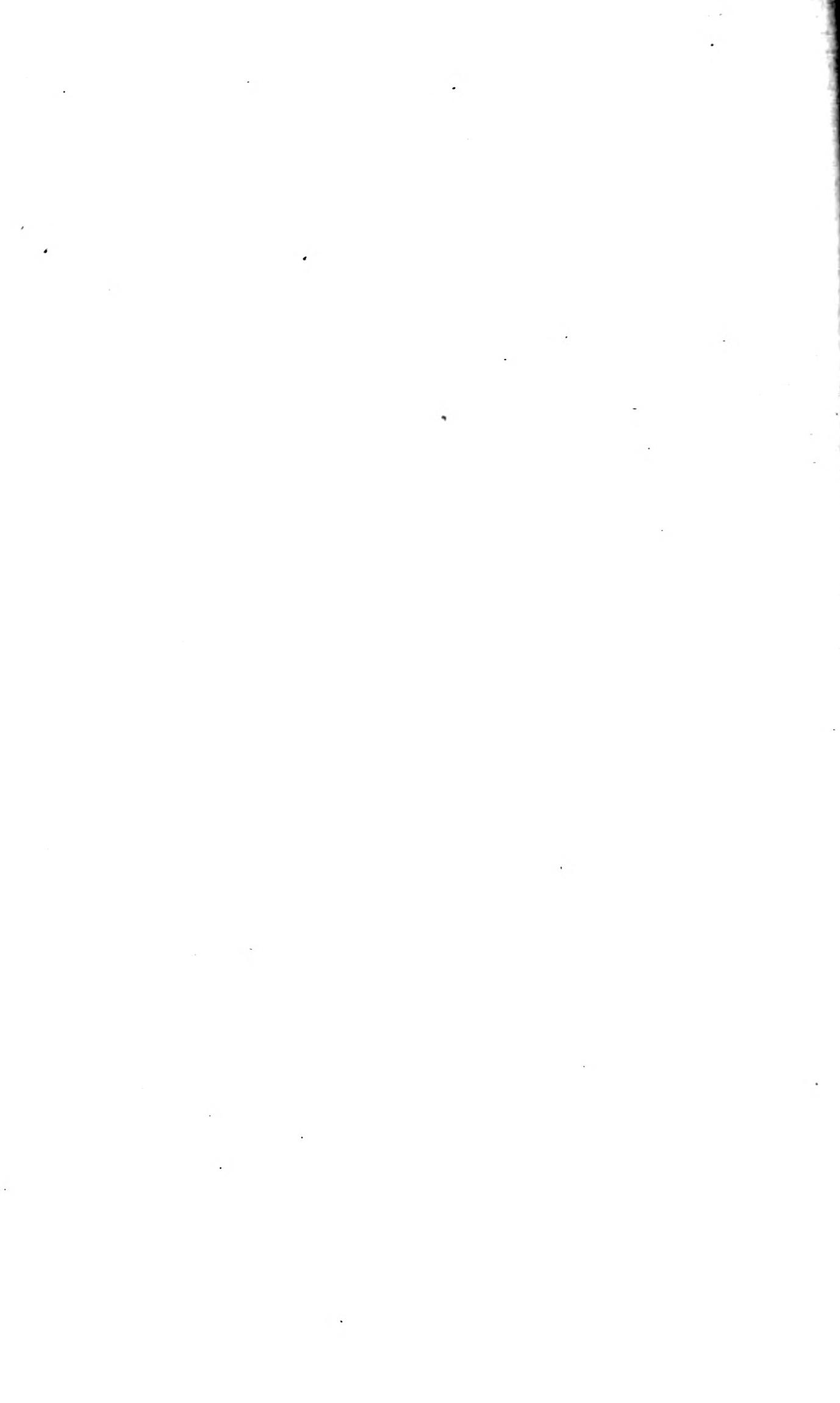
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